

PI BETA PHI  
*literacy toolkit*



[pibetaphi.org](http://pibetaphi.org)

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Pi Beta Phi believes in the power of reading. We believe reading always has been – and always will be – a powerful step toward a life of enduring impact. We believe when one out of four children grows up unable to read, that’s one child too many.

We believe in inspiring readers, sparking imaginations and igniting the desire to learn, that readers become leaders and that reading is the foundation of all we can achieve in life. For more than a century, we’ve committed ourselves to creating a more literate and productive society ... one child ... one moment at a time ... one life changed forever.

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# WHY LITERACY *matters*

According to data from the U.S. Department of Education\*, numerous studies have shown a connection between children’s access to books and reading achievement. Students who frequently read on their own, are read to at home and have access to more reading materials consistently have higher reading scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress than their peers.

At a time when students and educators face ongoing challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for books in the home has never been greater. In a recent survey conducted by our literacy partners at First Book®:



**85%**

**OF EDUCATORS**  
were concerned about children having no books in the home during the pandemic.



**80%**

**OF EDUCATORS**  
cited books as the item they most needed.



**61%**

**OF EDUCATORS**  
said they will need a restocked classroom library because many books were distributed to students when schools closed.

\* Source: [nces.ed.gov/pub96/web/96814.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/pub96/web/96814.asp)



Literacy is also closely tied to the achievement gap, or the differences in academic achievement between students with economic advantages and students from underserved populations. Data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress shows 78% of fourth-grade students from low-income areas are not reading at grade level, compared to 48% of their peers from more affluent areas. Comprehensive research from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, a national children's welfare philanthropy, shows this disparity has widened by 20% in the past decade and disproportionately includes children of color.

As the COVID-19 pandemic timeline continues to extend, the long-term effects of school closures and barriers associated with virtual learning threaten to further widen the achievement gap. Ensuring children have access to books and educational resources is a key strategy in helping to bridge this gap – and working toward greater equity in education.

# YOU CAN BE *one* WHO MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Students and educators need our help now more than ever. That's why Pi Phi and First Book are teaming up to provide educators with reading materials and resources to support students in need. During the month of March, Pi Phis will identify qualified educators and organizations in their communities and encourage them to register for First Book membership. Of the newly registered groups, 200 will receive a \$250 gift certificate for books through First Book Marketplace.

Through one simple act of literacy advocacy, you can be ONE who makes a difference. Bringing new books and resources to students and schools in your community takes just four steps.



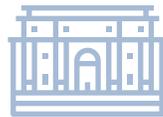
# *identify* EDUCATORS IN YOUR COMMUNITY

In general, anyone who works for or represents a program or organization serving children in need can sign up for First Book membership. While not every educator or organization in your community will qualify, a good place to start is with the relationships you already have.

- Create a list of schools, nonprofits and other organizations you already volunteer with or support.
- Think of Pi Phi sisters, friends and family members who are educators. Remember, there is no limit to the number of educators or employees from one school or organization who can register with First Book. Exhaust your personal network!
- Research local schools and nonprofits online. You'll likely find a phone number or email address on the "Contact Us" page of their website or their social media accounts.



SHELTERS & CLINICS



LIBRARIES & MUSEUMS



MILITARY FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAMS



FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

## WHO CAN *Sign up* WITH FIRST BOOK?



EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS



OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME PROGRAMS



AND MANY MORE!



SCHOOLS

When groups register, they will need to answer a few questions about the children and families they serve. First Book determines its own criteria for eligibility, and more detailed information is provided below. As you reach out to educators and organizations, try to confirm their eligibility if possible; they should know if they fit into one of the categories listed. If the information isn't readily available, that's ok! Encourage the group to sign up and let you know if they're unable to complete the registration process.

As determined by First Book, educators and organizations are eligible to register if they work for, or represent, programs serving families and households who:

- Come from a low-income background and/or receive emergency financial support in response to COVID-19
- Have children enrolled in Head Start or a Title I or Title I-eligible school
- Receive support from the USDA Food and Nutrition program
- Receive Title VII support
- Care for children living with disabilities

In addition, some specific programs serving families in need are eligible for First Book membership. These programs include organizations receiving federal support through the Universal Service Program for Schools and Libraries, Federally Qualified Health Centers, programs supporting military families and programs where at least 70% of children served come from households with low income.

### TIP

We recommend working on your outreach list in advance so you're ready to hit the ground running on March 1!

## KEY DATES TO *remember*

### FEBRUARY 15

Brainstorm a list of educators and organizations in your community and personal network. Start reaching out through email, phone calls and social media.

### MARCH 1

Registration opens for educators and organizations at [pibetaphi.org/literacy](https://pibetaphi.org/literacy). *Remember, we'll let you know when they register!*

### MARCH 15

Haven't heard back? Follow up with your contacts to be sure they register before the deadline.

### MARCH 31

Registration closes today!

### APRIL 1

First Book Marketplace gift certificates are distributed to randomly selected groups and book purchasing begins.

# share THE REGISTRATION LINK

Once you've developed your list of potential groups, it's time to reach out! Below you'll find some examples of how to start the conversation with the contacts you've brainstormed. You can personalize these examples as needed.

## TIP

Reaching out through a phone call is a great way to personally connect with educators and organizations in your community.

## SAMPLE LANGUAGE FOR EMAIL AND/OR PHONE OUTREACH

Hello, [recipient's name]!

My name is [your name] and I'm [a student at \_\_\_\_\_ and a proud member of Pi Beta Phi Fraternity for Women] / [a member of the \_\_\_\_\_ Alumnae Club of Pi Beta Phi]. During the month of March, I'm partnering with Pi Beta Phi and First Book to bring free reading materials and resources to organizations serving kids in need. We're also awarding \$250 toward new books from First Book Marketplace to 200 organizations! I recognize what an incredible impact [recipient's organization] has on our community and encourage you to sign up for this opportunity at [pibetaphi.org/literacy](https://pibetaphi.org/literacy).

Once you register, you'll have access to First Book's library of free reading materials and resources for educators and families. Informed by experts and extensive research, these resources are designed to help you support the students in your community. You'll also be entered in a drawing to receive a \$250 gift certificate to First Book Marketplace (groups will be selected at random).

Registration opens March 1 and closes March 31. You'll receive a confirmation email from Pi Beta Phi a few days after you register. Please be sure to include my name and email (see below) in your reply.

[Your first and last name], [Your email]

If you know a friend or colleague working with kids in need, please share this message so they can benefit from First Book membership, too!

For questions, please reach out to me or contact Pi Beta Phi's Engagement Coordinator Carolyn Loper at [cloper@pibetaphi.org](mailto:cloper@pibetaphi.org).

## SAMPLE LANGUAGE FOR SOCIAL MEDIA DIRECT MESSAGE (DM) OUTREACH

Hi, [recipient's name]! From March 1-31, I'm partnering with my sorority, Pi Beta Phi, and First Book to offer organizations access to free reading materials and resources and a chance to receive \$250 toward new books. I thought you might be interested in the opportunity – you can learn more and sign up at [pibetaphi.org/literacy](https://pibetaphi.org/literacy). You'll receive a confirmation email from Pi Beta Phi a few days after you register. Please be sure to include my name and email in your reply: [your first and last name], [your email].

## SAMPLE LANGUAGE FOR SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

Do you know a teacher or nonprofit in need of children's books? I'm partnering with my sorority, Pi Beta Phi, and First Book to provide books to children in need. Enter for your chance to receive \$250 worth of new books at [pibetaphi.org/literacy](https://pibetaphi.org/literacy). All entries will also receive access to free resources created by experts to help support kids and teens in your community.

I want to give my teacher friends a chance to receive \$250 worth of new books! I'm partnering with my sorority, Pi Beta Phi, and First Book to provide books to children in need. Enter at [pibetaphi.org/literacy](https://pibetaphi.org/literacy) and automatically receive access to free resources created by experts to help support kids and teens in your community.

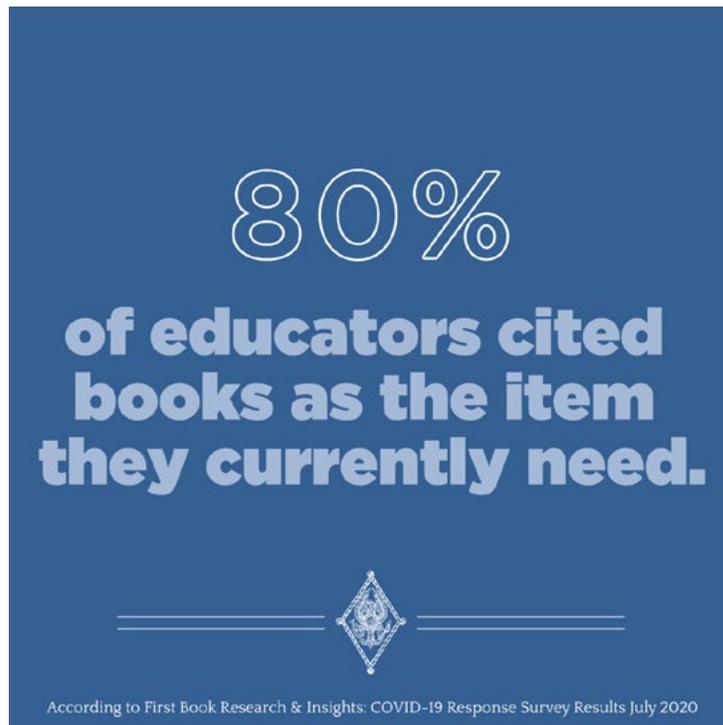
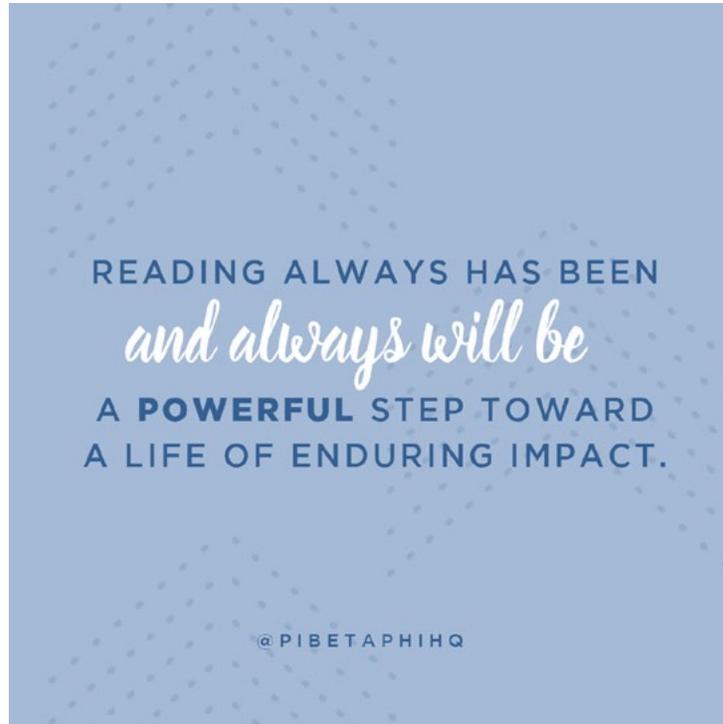
I want to make an impact in our community by connecting local organizations with new books for children in need. I'm partnering with my sorority, Pi Beta Phi, and First Book to give bring free reading resources to teachers and nonprofits across North America. Enter for your chance to receive \$250 worth of new books at [pibetaphi.org/literacy](https://pibetaphi.org/literacy). All entries will also receive access to free resources created by experts to help support kids and teens in our community.

### TIP

Tag Pi Phi (@PiBetaPhi on Facebook; @PiBetaPhiHQ on Instagram) or use #ReadLeadAchieve in your social media posts.

## SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA GRAPHICS

These graphics are ready to share on your social media accounts. Click to download them from the Pi Beta Phi website.



PI PHI WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION EFFORTS BY ENSURING 50% OF THE BOOKS AVAILABLE FEATURE TITLES FROM FIRST BOOK'S "STORIES FOR ALL" COLLECTION. BOOKS FROM THIS COLLECTION INCLUDE DIVERSE CHARACTERS AND THEMES, HELPING CHILDREN GAIN CONFIDENCE BY SEEING THEIR OWN EXPERIENCES REFLECTED IN THE PAGES AND DEVELOP EMPATHY BY READING ABOUT EXPERIENCES THAT DIFFER FROM THEIR OWN.

## *follow up* WITH YOUR CONTACTS

Registration for the initiative opens March 1 and continues through March 31. During the registration process, each educator or organizational representative will be asked to provide contact information for the person who referred them. Throughout March, you'll receive notifications from Pi Beta Phi for every one of your contacts who successfully registers. This way, you can keep track of how many organizations have completed the process and follow up with those who haven't. (You can even use this information for a friendly competition with your friends or other chapters and clubs!)

Immediately upon registering, newly registered groups will receive access to First Book's library of free reading materials and educational resources. These include:

- Research-based guides to help support students on timely topics such as race and racism, trauma, grief, loss and healing, and more
- Low-cost books and resources from First Book Marketplace
- Free books from the Book Bank (just pay shipping and handling)
- Funding opportunities from corporate partners and generous donors

In early April, 200 newly registered groups will be randomly selected to receive an additional \$250 gift certificate to First Book Marketplace. Along with their notification, selected groups will receive instructions outlining the book ordering process.

# DO IT ALL *again!*

Remember, educators and organizations have until March 31 to register for this opportunity. Throughout the month, keep researching and reaching out to new individuals and organizations serving students in need. The more educators you contact, the more educators are connected to the incredible resources provided by First Book – and the more you can help children in need through the power of reading.

**YOU CAN BE ONE WHO MAKES A DIFFERENCE ... ONE CHILD ...  
ONE MOMENT AT A TIME ... ONE LIFE CHANGED FOREVER.**



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## WHAT IS FIRST BOOK?

First Book is a nonprofit organization providing new books, learning materials and other educational essentials to children in need. Since our partnership began in 2007, Pi Phi and First Book have collaborated to donate millions of books to children and communities through innovative programming and impactful events. Learn more at [firstbook.org](http://firstbook.org).

## HOW DO GROUPS REGISTER WITH FIRST BOOK?

Eligible educators and organizations can access the registration form by visiting [pibetaphi.org/literacy](http://pibetaphi.org/literacy). Registration opens March 1 and closes March 31. *Note:* to be entered in the gift certificate drawing, groups must register through the link on the Pi Phi website.

## WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO REGISTER?

In general, anyone who works for or represents a program or organization serving children in need can sign up for First Book membership. Eligibility is need-based and determined by criteria from First Book. A program employee or representative should be able to confirm whether they're eligible. For more detailed information, see the list of First Book criteria on page 4 of this toolkit.

## WHY SHOULD GROUPS REGISTER?

Educators and organizations who register for First Book membership receive access to First Book's library of free reading materials and educational materials. In addition, 200 newly registered groups will receive a \$250 gift certificate toward new books from First Book Marketplace. (Groups who receive gift certificates will be selected at random.)

## WHEN CAN GROUPS REGISTER?

The registration form opens March 1 and closes March 31. We recommend developing your list of contacts ahead of time so you can begin your outreach early.

## MY EDUCATOR OR ORGANIZATION IS ALREADY A FIRST BOOK MEMBER. ARE THEY ELIGIBLE FOR THE CHANCE TO RECEIVE A GIFT CERTIFICATE?

Only newly registered groups (those who register as part of this initiative) are eligible to be selected to receive a gift certificate. Current First Book members still have full access to First Book's library of materials and resources. See page 5 of this toolkit for tips on finding additional eligible groups in your community.

## CAN INDIVIDUAL PI PHIS PARTICIPATE IN THIS INITIATIVE?

Yes! Every Pi Phi can be ONE who makes a difference by participating individually, and/or as part of a chapter or club.

## CAN I REGISTER AN EDUCATOR OR ORGANIZATION IN ANOTHER COMMUNITY?

Yes! While this initiative gives Pi Phis an opportunity to create change in their own communities, educators and organizations across the United States and Canada who meet First Book's eligibility criteria are encouraged to register.

## WHAT HAPPENS AFTER MY GROUP REGISTERS?

You'll receive an email notification from Pi Beta Phi letting you know your group has completed the registration process. If your group is selected to receive a gift certificate to First Book Marketplace, they'll be notified in April.

## HOW IS THIS INITIATIVE FUNDED?

Generous gifts to The Literacy Fund at Pi Beta Phi Foundation play a critical role in the success of this initiative and all Read > Lead > Achieve® programs, inspiring a lifelong love of reading. All Pi Phi literacy programs are fully funded by grants from our Foundation. Learn more at [pibetaphi.org/foundation](http://pibetaphi.org/foundation).

## HOW CAN I SHARE MORE ABOUT MY ORGANIZATION AND THEIR WORK IN OUR COMMUNITY?

We love sharing stories about the relationships our members, chapters and clubs are building with organizations in their areas. Visit [pibetaphi.org/submit](http://pibetaphi.org/submit) to tell us about the great work happening in your community.

## MY QUESTION ISN'T COVERED IN THIS TOOLKIT. WHO SHOULD I CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION?

Please reach out to Pi Beta Phi's Engagement Coordinator, Carolyn Loper, at [cloper@pibetaphi.org](mailto:cloper@pibetaphi.org). You can also find more information at [pibetaphi.org/literacy](http://pibetaphi.org/literacy).