Prime Time Family Reading
A Proposal for Continued State Funding

Humanities Washington, in consultation with the Washington State Library, the Washington Library Association, and OSPI English Language Arts, requests:

$1,000,000 for the biennium for 100 free programs serving children statewide

- Builds on the success of FY22 Supplemental Operating Budget Funding
- Continues critical investment in reading development
- Prioritizes low-income students, students of color, rural communities

2022 data on Washington State schools revealed:

- 42.4% of fourth graders could not read at grade level
- Students of color fare even worse: 59.5% of Indigenous children, 54% of Hispanic/Latino children, 53.6% of Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian children, and 44% of Black/African American children weren’t reading a 4th grade level.
- Students also continue to suffer social and emotional challenges from the pandemic.

Pandemic learning loss impacted students across the state and significant work is necessary to get kids back on track. Educators continue to feel overwhelmed and seek a community-based solution. Yet, if we do not act quickly, deficient reading skills will impact students future ability to learn and succeed.

What is Prime Time Family Reading?

Prime Time Family Reading is a free family reading program delivered by Humanities Washington in partnership with public libraries and local elementary schools. It serves primarily 6- to 10-year-old children who are struggling in school. Prime Time goes beyond teaching basic literacy skills; it launches lively discussions between children and adults in their lives about ideas, issues, and themes presented in children’s literature.

Prime Time participants meet in small cohorts of 10-25 families at a time weekly for 90-minute evening sessions at their local public library, school library, or over Zoom for a six-week period. In each session, children hear stories from a skilled storyteller, then discuss the book’s ethical and cultural themes with the help of a scholar and the child’s family. The program is also available in a bilingual format.
Schools implementing Prime Time saw the percentage of their students meeting grade-level standards for reading grow by an average of 4% for the student body as a whole. In surveys of participating families, an incredible:
- 95% have increased the amount of time they read together
- 93% have experienced a positive change in their attitudes toward reading
- 97% are now more likely to use library services

Prime Time also builds the capacity of parents to provide at-home support for their child’s development of literacy skills and reading habits, provides age- and/or language-appropriate books at home, is responsive to the unique needs of Washington families with a multicultural curriculum, and provides an effective intervention for addressing early reading failure.

Why make this request now?
This funding would boost the state’s high-priority efforts around equity and inclusion, helping to ensure that our most at-risk students, particularly in rural, immigrant, or communities of color, can make up for learning lost during the pandemic. Additionally, we make this ask at a time where our state’s Operating Budget has been stabilized by economic recovery, better-than-expected revenue growth, and the recent injection of federal funds.

Program Cost
Prime Time costs approximately $10,000 per session, including staffing and book expenses. Humanities Washington plans to target 100 schools with fewer than 50% of students reading at grade level. Total cost is anticipated to be $1 million for this intervention program and will serve 5000 children and their families (impacting multiple children) for a cost of approximately $200/child. Funds would be used for program planning staff, curriculum books, team member stipends, book shipping, family gift cards, family gift books, and meals, as well as training new staff.

“Prime Time Family Reading is one of the most engaging programs we offer.

The partnerships we have forged with local schools is invaluable and the families served always show enthusiasm for reading after attending.”

MELANIE BOERNER
SPOKANE COUNTY LIBRARY DISTRICT

Cities served by Prime Time

Airway Heights  Asotin  Auburn  Bellingham  Bothell  Burien  Chattanooy  Cheney  Chimacum  Clarkston  Colfax  Connell  Coupeville  Covington  Dayton  Eastsound  Edmonds  Ellensburg  Everett  Everson  Fall City  Fife  Granite Falls  Issaquah  Kennewick  Kent  Lakewood  Lind  Lyslden  Lynnwood  Marysville  Milton  Monroe  Mountlake Terrace  Mukilteo  Newport  North Bend  Oak Harbor  Oth Oruchars  Palouse  Pasco  Port Angeles  Port Hadlock  Port Townsend  Richland  Ritzville  Seattle  Sedro-Woolley  Shoreline  Snohomish  Spanaway  Spokane  Spokane Valley  Tacoma  Tukwila  University Place  Vancouver  Walla Walla  Woodland

Prime Time books

Selected books in English
Fish in Fish  The Big Orange Splot  The True Story of the Three Little Pigs  Why Mosquitos Buzz in People’s Ears  Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day  The Talking Eggs  Mufaro’s Beautiful Daughters  Anansi and the Moss-Covered Rock  Leon Po Po  Where the Wild Things Are  Abiyoyo  Fanny’s Dream  Amazing Grace  Flossie and the Fox  The Monkey and the Crocodile  Doctor De Soto

Selected books in Spanish
La Verdadera Historia De Los Tres Cerditos  Alexander Y El Dia Terrible, Horrible, Espantoso, Horrizable  Una Cuchara Para Cada Bocado  Las Bellas Hijas de Mufaro  La Mujer Que Brillaba Aun Mas Que el Sol  Donde Viven los Monstruos  Mi Propio Cuanito  El Sombrero del Tio Nacho  Regresando al Hogar  Graciela Asombrosa  El Maravilloslo Cabello de Dalia  Necesito Un Abrac