



“NEA’s Read Across America” 2026-27 State Affiliate Grant Criteria

Application Deadline: Friday, October 23, 2026

Applicants Notified: Friday, December 11, 2026

Description

Only NEA state affiliates may apply for a "Read Across America Grant" to enhance state affiliate coordinated Read Across America events and/or activities grounded in celebrating the foundational elements in building a nation of readers—diverse books, connecting reading with joy, and the freedom to learn.

Acknowledging that book and curriculum bans are challenges that NEA members across the country face, this grant program encourages proposals that use funds as a way to get diverse books into the hands of students. By diverse books, we mean books that feature diverse characters and recognize all diverse experiences, including (but not limited to) diversity of race, culture, language, setting, beliefs, gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, income, ability, religion, and family structure.

Proposals with event(s) or activities that increase awareness of Read Across America’s year-round focus and make reading more visible, diverse, accessible, and joyful are strongly encouraged.

State affiliates may apply for any amount up to a maximum of \$7,500. A total of \$75,000 will be awarded.

This grant opportunity is open **only** to state affiliates. Applications from local affiliates will not be considered. Local affiliates may work with state affiliates to develop a proposal; however, **the application must be submitted by the state affiliate.**

Examples of appropriate events and/or activities meeting criteria include:

- Plan events with special guest readers, activity centers, and opportunities for students to leave the events with a diverse book of their choosing.
- Use the book recommendations in the [2026-27 Read Across America Calendar](#) to implement a state-wide [Diverse Books Challenge](#) and establish regular guest readers to read aloud and do book related activities with students.
- Partner with Little Free Library and install, fill, and maintain association-branded little free libraries to support and improve student literacy and community exposure to diverse books.
- Provide resources for members and K-12 public school educators to host a diverse book club in their classroom or school, challenging members and educators to host at least one book club per county.
- Bring diverse authors and illustrators to schools or to communities for special virtual or in-person visits and provide students with copies of their books.

Read Across America Resources

- Find [ideas and other resources](#) to help you brainstorm an appropriate event or activity.
- More ideas from previous state affiliate grant awardees can be found [here](#).
- Find activity ideas related to specific books in the [2026-27 RAA Calendar](#) and for [previously recommended titles](#).

Application Deadline

- [Submit your application](#) by Friday, October 23, 2026.
- Applicants will be notified by December 11, 2026

What NEA Will Provide

- NEA staff will be available for consultation with the grant application process via phone calls and e-mail. NEA will not provide staff "on the ground" to coordinate the event or activity.
- Recommendations for potential partners like [First Book](#) for reduced cost books and contacts with publishers for quantities of books or for author visits.

Affiliate's Role and Responsibilities

- Implementation of the proposed program, event, or activity outlined in the State Affiliate Event Grant Application. RAA event grant should supplement funding, resources, and staffing from the state and/or local affiliates involved. Events should target schools with student populations in greatest need.
- Promotion of NEA's Read Across America program on state and local affiliates' online and social media, publications, news releases, and other member and external communication vehicles. NEA and RAA logos should appear alongside/near the state and/or local affiliate's branding.
- While the focus will be on member-driven, student-focused reading-related events, the state affiliate should also pursue earned media opportunities at the local and state levels, utilize member communications vehicles, and online/social media to promote NEA's Read Across America to both members and the public.
- Use your RAA event to help recruit and organize members by providing information in "meet and greet" type breakfast or lunch open houses and/or lit tables.
- Purchase books and other giveaways, such as "goody bags" and other appropriate items.
- Once funds are distributed, recipients of RAA grants for 2026-27, **MUST** provide, in advance, dates of any planned events to RAAEventsGrants@nea.org to help us plan potential photo or media opportunities.
- Recipients of previous RAA grants **MUST** submit a progress report before a 2027 application will be considered.
- Grant recipients are required to adhere by and implement [RAA logo standards](#).

For More Information

Contact Toni Smith, tsmith@nea.org.