**National Reading Program Grants**

The Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) Division of Early Care and Education (DECE) is awarding funding to reimburse non-profit organizations for book fees for Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library (DPIL).

**Eligibility**

To apply for a National Reading Program Grant through DCF, you must:

* Be a non-profit association as defined by Section 501 requirements of the Internal Revenue Code
* Prove affiliation with DPIL by March 28, 2025

**Apply Today**

Applications are open and will be accepted on a rolling basis, until funding runs out, or by March 28, 2025, whichever comes first. You will need the following to apply:

* Proof of affiliation with DPIL or willingness to become a local program partner
* Proof of non-profit status

**Important Dates**

* Applications Open: October 2024
* Applications Close (unless funding runs out earlier): March 28, 2025
* Spending Deadline for grants: May 31, 2025

**FAQs**

**What is Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library?**

Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library (DPIL) is an early-childhood literacy program created by Dolly Parton. Dolly started the Imagination Library in 1995 to serve the children of her hometown in Sevier County, Tennessee. Today, her program spans five countries and gifts over 3 million free, high-quality, age-appropriate books each month to children around the world. There is never a charge to families who participate in the program, and it is open to all children under the age of five in geographic areas with operating programs.

**How does DPIL work?** The program is made possible through funding shared by Dolly Parton herself, and Local Program Partners (LPP). The LPP is responsible for advertising the program and enrolling eligible families in their area. Partner organizations cover the cost of books through DPIL, which currently cost $26.00 per year per child. DPIL purchases and mails the books directly to the families.

**Why was Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library selected for this funding?**

[2023 Wisconsin Act 191](https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2023/related/acts/191#:~:text=A%20nonprofit%20organization%20is%20eligible,regardless%20of%20their%20family%20income.) outlined the requirements for an eligible “national reading program” under this grant program. Based on DCF research, Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library is the only program meeting all the requirements set forth in the act.

**Who is eligible to apply for funds?**

Only non-profit entities can receive funding through this program. A “non-profit entity” is defined by Section 501 of the Internal Revenue Code.

**How can I use the funding?**

Awardees can use funds to cover a portion of the cost of books through DPIL. Funding cannot support administrative or start-up costs for the DPIL program. The program can reimburse costs associated with book purchases made from the start of the current state fiscal year, which began on July 1, 2024 through the spending deadline of May 31, 2025.

**Is there a deadline for spending funding awarded through this grant?**

Yes. All grant awards must be spent by June 30, 2025. Terms will vary based on the award date.

**If my organization operates the program in multiple communities, can I apply for more than one award?**

No. Entities can only receive one award, to reimburse 50%, up to $10,000, of the total costs associated with purchasing books. This grant is not intended to cover an awardee’s operating expenses or personnel costs. DCF knows that some current affiliates offer DPIL in multiple communities, which DPIL considers separate local program partners. However, 2023 Wisconsin Act 191 does not provide for multiple awards. If your organization is a LPP in multiple communities with smaller enrollments, you can apply for funds across more than one geographic area. For example, perhaps 100 children are enrolled in Community A and 200 are enrolled in Community B: you could request grant dollars to support both communities. The total request still cannot exceed 50% of book purchasing costs, up to $10,000.

**Can my organization apply even if we are not a current Imagination Library local program partner?**

Yes. You can apply but you must become a local program partner by March 28, 2025. If you do not receive active LPP status by this date, DCF may terminate your award to allow other organizations to move off a wait list. DPIL may take weeks or months to approve affiliation.

**Who makes decisions about Imagination Library affiliation? Who can I contact for more information?**

The Dollywood Foundation, which houses Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library, makes decisions about affiliation. DCF does not approve nor deny local program partners. More information on becoming a LPP can be found on the [Imagination Library website](https://imaginationlibrary.com/usa/). Interested organizations may also contact Lauren Wirt, Regional Director, Dollywood Foundation at [lwirt@imaginationlibrary.com](mailto:lwirt@imaginationlibrary.com) for more information. Please note that approval may take weeks or months.

**Are books available in languages other than English?**

Yes. Books are available in Spanish.

**What is the deadline to apply?**

DCF will make awards on a rolling basis until funds runs out, or through March 28, 2025, whichever happens first.