

Agency: Commerce, Community and Economic Development**Grants to Named Recipients (AS 37.05.316)****Grant Recipient: Best Beginnings****Federal Tax ID: 45-5066055****Project Title:****Project Type: Equipment and Materials**

Best Beginnings - Anchorage Imagination Library Books and Postage

State Funding Requested: \$25,000**House District: Anchorage Areawide (11-27)**

Future Funding May Be Requested

Brief Project Description:

Purchase of books and postage for delivery to children in the Anchorage

Funding Plan:

Total Project Cost:	\$25,000
Funding Already Secured:	(\$0)
FY2015 State Funding Request:	<u>(\$25,000)</u>
Project Deficit:	\$0

*Funding Details:**Received \$15,000 in FY 12, 15,000 in FY 13 and then \$15,000 in FY 14 in state capital money**In 2013/14 funding from United Way was \$45,000 and funding from Best Beginnings was \$181,000. Corporate and individual donations was \$23,000 and the state capital was \$15,000. Total project cost in 2013/14 is \$258,000***Detailed Project Description and Justification:**

The Anchorage Imagination Library (AIL), a local affiliate of the Dolly Parton Imagination Library, provides a book every month to 8,709 children in the Municipality of Anchorage. All Anchorage children from birth to age 5 are eligible to participate in the program which works to encourage reading in the home and help prepare children to enter kindergarten ready to succeed. The program cost is just \$30 per child for a book every month for a year. AIL also organizes free events to give parents tools to make reading fun and extend the learning. In 2013, AIL's 8 events throughout the city attracted 1,638 participants. Scientific studies* have confirmed that Imagination Library children are better prepared for kindergarten, and the earlier they're enrolled, the better. The effect lingers: participating children score higher on third grade reading tests.

Part of Best Beginnings, the AIL program is managed and delivered by volunteers. This keeps administrative costs very low. The state funding would be matched dollar for dollar with private and local contributions. In the past 12 months, AIL's enrollment has grown from 7,389 to 8,709 children--or 39% of Anchorage's children under age five. The monthly invoice for books and postage is more than \$18,000 and growing.

The money provided through the capital budget will go towards continuing to grow the program, particularly in AIL's target areas: Mountain View, Fairview and Spenard. Without these funds, AIL could be forced to cap growth and turn away new participants from a low-cost program that has proven benefits. The program is scalable and all capital funding will be put toward books and postage.

Project Timeline:

\$18,000 monthly expenditures would occur throughout FY2015

Entity Responsible for the Ongoing Operation and Maintenance of this Project:

The Anchorage Imagination Library

Grant Recipient Contact Information:

Name: Karen Matthias
Title: Volunteer Steering Committee Chair
Address: 3350 Commercial Dr. Ste. 104A
Anchorage, Alaska 99501
Phone Number: 301-1022
Email: kjmatthias@gmail.com

Has this project been through a public review process at the local level and is it a community priority? Yes No

MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE



Office of the Mayor

Phone: 907-343-7100

FAX: 907-343-7180

Mayor Dan Sullivan

January 8, 2013

Karen Matthias
Volunteer Steering Committee Chair,
Anchorage Imagination Library

Dear Karen,

Congratulations to the Anchorage Imagination Library for enrolling more than 7,000 children in your program. Our families are benefiting every month thanks to your work.

Last year, I conducted an Education Summit that focused on improving education right here in our community. One of the summit outcomes highlighted the importance of young students being able to read.

My wife, Lynette, was an elementary school teacher for many years and saw first-hand how a love for reading and books made a difference in a child's education success. In addition to school, the opportunity for children to read or be read to at home is priceless. That amazing opportunity is now available to thousands of families who might not otherwise have it - thanks to your efforts. The excitement of receiving a new book in the mail each month is an excellent way to set the wheels of literacy in motion.

I understand the work of the Anchorage Imagination Library is managed by volunteers. It's your dedicated volunteer efforts in literacy and learning that are at the heart of the program and what helps make our community truly a great place to live.

Thank you for what you do for our children and families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dan Sullivan".

Dan Sullivan
Mayor of Anchorage



Anchorage School District

Education Center

5530 E. Northern Lights Blvd. • Anchorage, AK 99504 • 907-742-4000 • www.asdk12.org

February 13, 2014

Aleesha Towns-Bain
Volunteer Steering Committee Chair
Anchorage Imagination Library
3350 Commercial Drive, Suite 104A
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Dear Aleesha,

As a 23-year educator in the Anchorage School District, I have seen first-hand the importance of early literacy.

We want children to start school prepared to be successful and early literacy has proven to make a difference in children's education. When young children are exposed to vocabulary and have reading modeled for them, they do better in school. Additionally, the parent and child interaction and positive connection created through reading together builds a strong bond that is critical in these young years.

I believe the efforts of Anchorage Imagination Library support this important work. By providing free books to children under the age of five, your group aids in literacy development and a love of reading which contribute to a healthy foundation for learning and academic achievement.

As superintendent of the Anchorage School District, I whole heartedly support the efforts of Anchorage Imagination Library for helping to build early literacy skills in our future students. And, as a parent of a young child myself, I want to thank you and your committee for your volunteer work that is so important in our community.

Sincerely,

Ed Graff
Superintendent

Educating All Students for Success in Life

Anchorage School Board Tam Agosti-Gisler, President
Natasha von Imhof, Vice President
Kameron Perez-Verdia, Clerk

Bettye Davis, Treasurer
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Superintendent Ed Graff



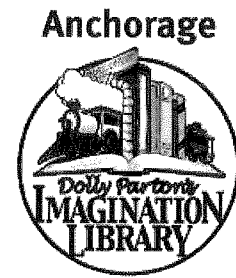
**Did you say a free
book a month?**



Until I'm five?



Oh, thank you!



The Anchorage Imagination Library has provided more than 250,000 books to children under five in Anchorage since 2009. Here are some highlights:

- **For only \$30 per year, each child receives a book every month in the mail;**
- More than **8,600 children** currently receive books; enrollment has grown by over 1,000 children in the last year;
- There are **almost no administrative costs**, as the support work is mostly done by volunteers who believe that all Anchorage children deserve access to quality children's books so that they enter kindergarten eager and ready to learn;
- While all Anchorage children are eligible for the program, we **target enrollment activities in low income neighborhoods**, at charitable events like **Neighborhood Gift** and through the **Program for Infants and Children**;
- Hundreds of children and parents attend our popular **monthly events** designed to give parents tools to make reading at home fun;
- To date, the program has been **funded with local donations** from various groups and individuals, **along with support from Best Beginnings** and the **United Way**, because they recognize the tremendous value of inspiring parents to read to their children;
- We pick up undeliverable books from Anchorage's post offices every month for delivery to **homeless shelters**, reaching some of the **most vulnerable children in our community**.

This project is part of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. **It has been shown to improve student performance and better prepare youngsters for kindergarten**, in a study conducted by the Tennessee Board of Regents. Dolly Parton's Imagination Library selects high-quality books, negotiates with publishers and arranges the mailing, but each local program must raise funds to pay for the books and postage.

We are asking for support from your discretionary funds. For only \$75,000, we could send a high-quality book every month for a year to 2,500 children in Anchorage, Girdwood and Eagle River. None of the dollars are spent for administration. And best of all, it helps get kids in our community ready for success in school. What a smart investment!

Thank you for considering our request. How often do you get a chance to do **so much good for so little money—and with volunteer labor?** Please contact me any time if you need more information or have any questions at 301-1022 or kjmatthias@gmail.com. Anchorage Imagination Library is a program of Best Beginnings, a 501(c)(3) public non-profit organization.

Karen Matthias, Volunteer Steering Committee Member (Past Chair), Anchorage Imagination Library