

PRIME TIME READING GUIDELINES

PRIME TIME FAMILY READING APPLICATION GUIDELINES

Prime Time Family Reading is a national program serving 6- to 10-year-old kids and their families. Participating families build early literacy skills, engage in critical thinking, and connect with each other through the act of reading and discussion.

Prime Time Family Reading gatherings take place in-person once a week over six consecutive weeks. During each session, families first gather to share a meal together. Then a storyteller reads a children's book, and a facilitator helps guide families through a discussion about the story. These storyteller- and facilitator-led discussions encourage kids and adults alike to find personal connections to cultural themes and values in the story, and talk through big ideas like empathy, justice, and compassion in ways that are uniquely relevant to each community served. Featuring lively storytelling and conversation, these gatherings offer multiple opportunities for families and young children to bond around the act of reading, find connection, think deeply, and have a lot of fun with books and reading.

●●● TIMELINE ●●●

Prime Time Family Reading programs take place over 6 consecutive weeks. Programs may begin as early as Aug. 1, 2025, and must begin by Oct. 15, 2025. The final session in the 6-week program must conclude no later than Dec. 14, 2025.

- Information session – April 9
- Application deadline – May 7
- Award notification – May 30
- Team orientation with NJCH – June 2025, interview
- Prime Time training (virtual) – July (exact dates TBA)
- Implementation period – August 1-December 15, 2025
- Final report – within 90 days of final session

Exact dates for program implementation will be determined by each host site and are subject to approval from NJCH. A final report from the host site will be due within 90 days of the conclusion of the final session of the program. NJCH will provide the documents required for final reporting to each host site.

●●● ELIGIBILITY ●●●

- Prime Time Family Reading awards from the New Jersey Council for the Humanities are open to New Jersey-based public libraries. The library may work in partnership with other nonprofit organization(s) in their communities, but the award will be made to and must be administered by the library.
- Libraries with an open NJCH grant or other program award (such as Community History, Humanities Lab, Informed NJ, or a Sponsorship) are not eligible to apply for this program until the final report on the open award has been approved and the award has been closed.
- Eligible host sites must have facilities with ADA-accessible spaces for approximately 50 participants to gather in-person and share a meal, as well as a separate area for younger children to gather for their stories and activities.

••• PROGRAM TEAM •••

Host sites are required to staff a program team fulfilling the following roles, which may be made up of staff, volunteers, or community members.

PROGRAM COORDINATOR (\$1000 STIPEND)

Manages the planning and implementation of Prime Time at the host site by gathering the program team, coordinating all logistics (book purchase, meals, door prizes, etc.), promoting the program and recruiting participants, and handling all administrative needs with NJCH. This person should be an employee of the library.

DISCUSSION FACILITATOR (\$1000 STIPEND)

Facilitates post-story discussion of humanities themes and issues found in the books and eagerly transmits their love of reading and talking about books to audience by modeling techniques for initiating and encouraging conversation. Must be comfortable working with participants with limited reading skills and those who may not have experience talking about books.

STORYTELLER (\$1000 STIPEND)

Reads the stories at each session, demonstrating read aloud techniques for parents. Assists the Discussion Facilitator with post-story conversation. While this person should feel comfortable presenting to a large group, it is recommended that they not be a trained actor or storyteller.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZER (\$500 STIPEND)

Assist the program coordinator with recruitment of families to participate in the program. Assist with the preparation of the space for each session. Welcome families and assist with their needs during each session (serving food, making nametags, giving directions, troubleshooting problems).

PRESCHOOL COORDINATOR (\$300 STIPEND)

Attend to the needs of younger siblings (ages 3-5) who attend the programs. Present age-appropriate books and activities related to the theme that will engage this age group during stories and discussion for older siblings and their adults.

We include the recommendation for stipend amounts for each of these positions for the duration of the program (preparation + 6 weeks of implementation). Ultimately host sites will determine the final amount each program team member will be paid in the final budget created before program implementation.

NJCH recommends having most program team members identified at the time of application. If you are having difficulty identifying someone to fulfill one of the roles, we will do our best to assist you.

Training is required before any individuals may serve in any role in the program. Training workshops provide essential skills for program administration, as well as opportunities to connect with the national network of Prime Time affiliate agencies and host sites. Program team members will be invited to join the next national training sessions taking place over two weekends (exact times TBD) in July. Training workshops will take place virtually, and details regarding dates, times, and agendas for the workshops will be provided after applications are approved. Team members will receive manuals and other training materials in advance of the workshop.

FUNDING AND EXPENSES

Prime Time Family Reading hosts receive an award of \$6500 to support the planning and implementation of their programs. While each site will be responsible for developing a final budget to submit to NJCH ahead of the program's implementation, expenses should be roughly apportioned as follows:

- \$1200 – books
- \$1500 – food and other program supplies
- \$3800 – program team honoraria

We request that sites purchase enough books for all participating families to keep a copy of each book for their home library.

No match of awarded funds is required. However, host sites must track any funds matched by the host site (both cash and in-kind) and include that information in their final report.

ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

Eligible expenses include:

- Salaries and benefits
- Fees and honoraria
- Local travel
- Books
- Book bags
- Publicity and marketing expenses (including postage)
- Food and beverages
- Gift cards
- Other supplies and equipment directly related to the program (check with NJCH staff if you're not sure what might fit in this category)

INELIGIBLE EXPENSES

Ineligible expenses include:

- Media production, including print publications, videography, or audio recording
- Travel not directly related to program implementation (for example, to professional conferences or workshops)
- Fellowships, scholarships, or prizes
- Academic courses, workshops, or training
- Capital expenses, including construction, preservation, or renovation
- Purchase of equipment not directly related to or necessary for the completion of the program
- Acquisitions or cataloguing outside established Prime Time curriculum
- Lobbying and fundraising activities
- Expenses incurred before the established award period
- Ticket fees
- Food or beverages not directly connected to Prime Time programs

CONTACT US

NJCH Program Staff are available throughout the application period to answer your questions and discuss any points of interest to you and your organization. To get in touch, please contact the program coordinator, Sylvester Cruz, at either 609.695.4303 or scruz@njhumanities.org.