Planning Your Community-Wide Read
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- Expense Worksheet
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- Sample Press Release
- Event Checklist
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Introduction

This guide has been compiled by the Public Programs Office of the American Library Association as a resource for librarians everywhere.

We hope that this guide will be a valuable resource for novice and veteran alike—whether you have already produced a couple community-wide reads or you are contemplating taking the first steps to planning a community-wide read for your town, county or library system.

We are grateful to librarians and program directors across the continent who sent us their materials and talked with us about their programs. Our thanks to Nancy Pearl from the Washington Center for the Book, Mary Dempsey and Amy Eshelman from Chicago Public Library, Steve Sumerford from Greensboro Public Library, Sheila Murphy from the Wallace-Reader’s Digest Funds and John Cole from the Center for the Book, at the Library of Congress for their leadership and consultation.

For more information about the Public Programs Office of the American Library Association, please visit www.al.org/publicprograms.

— ALA Public Programs Office

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Community-Wide Reading Programs

Whether it’s called a city-wide book club, a state-wide reading campaign, “If All of Seattle Read the Same Book,” or “One Book, One City,” communities of all shapes and sizes are adopting the concept originated by the Washington Center for the Book: people coming together through the reading and discussion of a common book.

Since 1998, when the Washington Center for the Book hosted author Russell Banks for four days of programs and discussion about his novel, *The Sweet Hereafter*, communities all over the United States have increasingly embraced the notion of civic unity through the reading of literature. There are now statewide, citywide, countywide, and event country-wide reading programs all over the world.

This resource guide is designed for program directors—the people who will guide the project from start to finish. This guide presents a number of different models for communities to follow and resources for developing a program tailored to your community.

**What Is a Community-Wide Read?**

“The idea is that the city that opens the same book closes it in greater harmony.”

“People can go for days at a time not talking to anyone outside their immediate family. There are precious few opportunities for people of different ethnic background, economic levels or ages to sit down together and discuss ideas that are important to them this project provides that opportunity.”
— Nancy Pearl, Director, Washington Center for the Book

“This program is a wonderful opportunity to bring individuals together in the community through a shared reading experience. It is certain to enrich the lives of those who participate.”
— Bill Bogaard, Mayor, Pasadena, California

“I wanted the community to connect, and I wanted a way for us to talk about something shared…it’s a great conversation starter.”
— Gus Garcia, Mayor, Austin, Texas, commenting on the Austin Public Library’s “The Mayor’s Book Club”

All of these reading initiatives share a number of commonalities, ranging from the concept’s populist appeal, its new approach to a basic reading and discussion model, and its ability to create a shared experience of reading among a wide spectrum of people.
Setting Program Goals
By setting goals you will be able to articulate your plans, your needs for assistance and the impact that you hope this program will have on your community. By setting clear goals you convey your vision for this program to your supporters, colleagues, sponsors, partners and the general public.

Sample Goals:

• United We Read, Kansas City, Missouri
  Book: Plainsong by Kent Haruf
  “The goal of United We Read is to get our community talking and communicating with one another.”

• Citywide Reads, Santa Monica, California
  Book: Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress by Dai Sijie
  “To promote literacy; intergenerational book-centered discussion; and to foster a sense of community by bringing people together through literature.”

• The Mayor’s Book Club, Austin, Texas
  Book: Bless Me Ultima by Rudolfo Anaya
  “To promote literacy and foster community and discussion.”

• DC We Read 2002, Washington, D.C.
  Book: Having Our Say, the Delany Sisters' First 100 Years by Sarah and A. Elizabeth Delany with Amy Hill Hearth
  “To promote reading, tackle illiteracy and foster a page-turning togetherness.”

• One City, One Story, Pasadena, California
  Book: The Soloist by Mark Salzman
  “This program is designed to broaden and deepen an appreciation of reading and compel friends, families and neighbors to share their experience while reading the same book. The project is further intended to engage the community in dialogue and seeks to bring the Pasadena community together by promoting tolerance and understanding about differing points of view.”

The next section contains questions that you may want to consider when framing the goals for your community-wide reading program.
Identifying Goals

Use the following questions to formulate up to four overall program goals.

Program Goals
What do you want the initiative to accomplish?

How will the library benefit?

Will you be able to continue and maintain the initiative?

Audience Goals*
Who will your program serve (ages, demographics, library use)?

How many (% of target population)?

Why this audience?

What are the interests of audience?

What are the needs of this audience and how will they benefit?

Thematic/Collection Goals
Are there themes that relate to library or community issues?

Is there an area of the collection that you want to emphasize?

Community Goals
What issues/agendas are relevant to your community?

Which community organizations share some of your goals?

*For more on target audience, see the Marketing & Promotion section, page 25
Goals Worksheet

Consider your answers to the previous questions and formulate up to four goals for your community-wide reading initiative.

1.

2.

3.

4.

A good program finds connections between goals.
**Setting Your Timeline**

After you set project goals, construct a practical working timeline that will enable you to complete an excellent community-wide reading program.

**Create an Ideal Timeline**

We recommend that you begin your community-wide read planning process a minimum of six months in advance. Many communities have begun the planning process over a year in advance of the campaign launch. If this becomes an annual or biannual initiative, your timeline will become streamlined and more efficient with each program.

The timeline below is an example, based on an October kickoff, which lists some of the tasks involved in the planning and production process. Use the worksheet on the next page to create an ideal timeline as a starting point for your planning process, realizing that you will need to adjust it as planning and production are underway.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Task Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September:</td>
<td>Initial planning/goal-setting; create list of possible partners and committee members; create list of potential sponsors and funders; contact local government, arts and humanities councils, foundations; create list of possible books; begin budgeting process (see page 12).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October:</td>
<td>Send out committee invitations; letters of inquiry to partners, sponsors, and funders.</td>
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<tr>
<td>November:</td>
<td>Book selection; author invitation; notify publisher of book order quantity (see page 15).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December:</td>
<td>Author confirmation; meet with website planning team; meetings with program partners, bookstores.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January:</td>
<td>Assign reading guide research; sponsorship development; additional program development; notify school systems and library staff (see page 21).</td>
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<tr>
<td>February – March:</td>
<td>Reading guide development; sponsorship development; events scheduling and planning; contact additional speakers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>April – May:</td>
<td>Printed materials design; confirmation of related program speakers; plan promotional campaign; announcement to public (see pages 21, 25).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June–July:</td>
<td>Confirm details with author, publisher; make travel arrangements (see page 18).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August:</td>
<td>Distribution of publicity materials; reading and discussion group leader training (see page 24).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September:</td>
<td>Final confirmations with author, publisher; distribution of promotional materials; system-wide meeting with staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October:</td>
<td>Community-wide reading kick-off and programs; evaluations; final reports (see pages 40, 41).</td>
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# Timeline Worksheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Tasks to Complete</th>
<th>Deadlines</th>
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</table>
Finding Partnerships

A project of this scale involves the whole community. Getting the word out means creating strategic partnerships in different sectors of the community.

Partnerships can assume many forms—financial sponsorship, co-presenters, organizations that will donate goods or services, marketing efforts, consultation, demographic analysis and feedback.

A partnership will only be successful if both partners gain something from the relationship. Identify groups that you have worked with in the past and ones that you would like to work with in the future. Try to think “outside of the box” and don’t forget to reference program goals. Are you trying to reach a new demographic? Which organization in your community directly serves that group? Share your project plans with potential partners and see if your goals resonate with their mission, interests, or intentions for community outreach.

“The book campaign has given the University an opportunity to forge alliances with the wider Austin Community. ‘We’re building a community through reading, and we’re reaching out beyond the 40 Acres to involve the community in intellectual endeavors,’ Evan Carton, director of the [University of Texas] Humanities Institute, said. ‘We’re breaking down the walls of the university. Every scholar is a citizen and every citizen can be a scholar.’”

— “Bless Me Ultima: A Citywide Success Story in Reading”
The Daily Texan, Austin, Texas, September 5, 2002
**Financial Partnerships**

**Municipal Support**
By reaching out to the leaders of your city, county and state government, you are creating an opportunity to raise the profile of the library and to engage municipal leadership in the library in a new way. Present your vision for the initiative to them as the new, dynamic and populist initiative that it is. Explain the value of their sponsorship and support, both symbolically and financially. Make a case for the value of contributing municipal funds to help offset the costs of the program. Once secured, match municipal money with funding from your state and regional arts and humanities councils.

**State and Regional Arts and Humanities Councils**
Most state and regional arts and humanities councils accept programming proposals from libraries under mini-grant, short-term grants, resource grants or special project opportunities. Check for your state’s arts agency at [http://nasaa-arts.org/aoa/saaweb.shtml](http://nasaa-arts.org/aoa/saaweb.shtml) and your state’s humanities council at [http://www.neh.gov/whoweare/statecouncils.html](http://www.neh.gov/whoweare/statecouncils.html)

**Foundations**
Research your community’s foundations, library donor lists, and other regional not-for-profit sponsor lists to identify potential supporters of the community-wide reading initiative. There are many resources to be found online, such as [www.fundsnetservices.com/regions.htm](http://www.fundsnetservices.com/regions.htm), which has an online guide to many grantmakers by state.

**Corporate Sponsors**
This project is perfect for sponsorship by area businesses and corporations. What better way to reach so many people in the community? Familiarize yourself with any charitable giving that local corporations engage in. Research their corporate mission statements and identify companies whose corporate mission and/or giving interests might intersect with your program goals. Even small companies often support their community by sponsoring youth athletic teams, school plays, and neighborhood fund drives. Explore possible contacts by finding out whether the corporation has a community relations manager or if the CEO is a library patron. Talk to your library trustees, board members, and major supporters about corporate connections that might be avenues to funding support.

**Book Stores**
Local book stores are natural partners for in-kind donations and programming partnerships. Their involvement often includes hosting book discussion groups and related programming, coordinating book and merchandise sales, and providing substantial marketing support. Book stores are perfect points of distribution for bookmarks, buttons and promotional materials. Store window and in-store displays provide excellent and eye-catching publicity and increase the visibility of the initiative in the community.

**Community Groups**
For many community membership organizations, community service and philanthropy is part of their mission. Such organizations as the Rotary Club, Kiwanis, and the Junior League, local business associations, chambers of commerce, and men’s and women’s arts, sports, and civic clubs, are good candidates for financial contributions to your community-wide read.
Building a Budget
Using your timeline, goals and programming experience sit down with your director or board and determine how your library will finance the community-wide read.

It is important to calculate donations of goods and services (referred to in the Budget Worksheet on the following page as *In-Kind*), as well as cash budget items. By mapping out all of your expenses, you will gain a clear picture of how much money you will need to raise and which community businesses, organization and agencies you will want to approach for funds, goods and services. Use the Budget Worksheet to begin your budget planning.
## Budget Worksheet
(see the Toolkit for interactive worksheet)

### EXPENSES

#### Books (number of copies X cost per copy)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cash Expenses</th>
<th>In-Kind</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hardcover</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paperback</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Language Translations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shipping and Processing</td>
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#### Author Expenses

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Lodging/Meals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Airfare</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenses</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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#### Other Program Speakers

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</thead>
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<td>Honorarium</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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#### Related Expenses

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<tr>
<td>Telephone</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meetings</td>
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#### Staff Time

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<tbody>
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<td>Administration</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
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<tr>
<td>Materials Development</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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#### Publicity & Marketing

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<tr>
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<td>Publicity Materials Development</td>
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<td>Press Outreach</td>
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<td>Community Outreach</td>
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<td>Web Page Production</td>
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#### Printing

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<th>Cash Expenses</th>
<th>In-Kind</th>
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<td>Reading and Discussion Guides</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bookmarks, Postcards, Buttons</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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**Total of Cash Expenses**

**Total of In-Kind Expenses**

**Project Total**
## Budget Worksheet
(see the Toolkit for interactive worksheet)

### REVENUES

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<th>Source</th>
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<tr>
<td>Friends of the Library</td>
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<tr>
<td>Library Foundation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Municipal Government</td>
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<tr>
<td>State/Local Arts Council Grant</td>
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<td>State/Local Humanities Council Grant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foundation Grant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Sponsors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sponsors</th>
<th>Cash Revenue</th>
<th>In-Kind</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Hotel</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Airline</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Restaurant</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Book Store</td>
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<td>Publisher</td>
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<tr>
<td>Printer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Radio or TV Station</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local Businesses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arts Organizations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Total of Cash Revenue**

**Total of In-Kind Revenue**

**Project Total**

- Cash expenses should not exceed cash revenue
- In-Kind Revenue total should match In-Kind expense total
- If your Community-Wide Read has additional components such as school outreach, writing workshops, or special events, you will want to factor in those costs as well.
Selection of the Book

The book is the heart of the community-wide reading project. There are thousands of wonderful books to choose from and narrowing the field may seem like a daunting task. However, the first step in the book selection process is to consider your project goals (see Setting Program Goals, page 5). Are you planning to stimulate discussion of particular themes, raise community issues, and examine values? Are the new audiences that you are hoping to reach going to be more engaged by a well known, new or classic work? These are important questions for you and other decision makers to consider when beginning the book selection process.

“By selecting a book that tackles a variety of issues, the program then takes it one step farther by encouraging people to talk about the themes and concepts found in the book. Themes most notable in Having Our Say are education, family, racism, migration, independence and longevity.” —DC We Read 2002

Who Decides

There are many different approaches to selecting the book for your community-wide read. Libraries have convened committees and advisory groups, taken suggestions from the public, adopted another city’s program model (book included), and even taken a citywide vote. Keep in mind that just because The House on Mango Street by Sandra Cisneros worked for Miami’s 2002 “One Book, One Community,” doesn’t mean it will automatically be a successful choice for your community. You will have to gauge what is right for your community. Many libraries have consulted internally and simply selected a book. Most communities convene a selection committee or an advisory committee. With any committee it is important to present the committee with your expectations of them, your goals for the project, and a clear number of deadlines. Representation is important. Remember the specific segment of the community you are targeting for participation and make sure that community has a voice in the programming.

Often, after the first year of the program, when the community’s imagination has been captured, a wonderful dilemma emerges—one involving many suggestions, much enthusiasm and, of course, so many books to choose from.

What Sort of Book

Many communities have found that selecting a well-known author with a national or regional reputation encourages the broadest participation. The book must have compelling issues, characters and themes to encourage discussion (see Interactive Toolkit, “One Book Titles and Authors”).

Book Selection Issues

Guidance should be found in the goals you have identified for your initiative. The book you choose should tie into and advance the goals you’ve set for your community-wide reading initiative. Also consider the audiences you are trying to reach. For example, many cities try to appeal to people with a reading level of high school and above, to ensure the widest pool of discussion.
Communities such as Greensboro, North Carolina, choose a book with the express purpose of facilitating discussion of current issues:

“One City, One Book is a simple idea designed to bring people together to discuss literature and, more importantly, issues that affect us all. We have selected the novel, “A Lesson Before Dying” by Ernest Gaines, because we believe it can serve as an excellent springboard for discussions of such universal issues as death, education, religion, racism, justice, love, family and faith.”

— Greensboro (North Carolina) Public Library Web Site
http://www.greensborolibrary.org/books/one_city.htm

For other communities, the choice is between “adult” or “youth” titles, depending on the age range of the audiences targeted. Seattle has run parallel city-wide reading programs for youth and adult audiences (Holes by Louis Sachar as the youth title and Wild Life by Molly Gloss as the adult title). If you are considering centering your community-wide read on a youth title, be aware that many adults may assume that the initiative isn’t for them, but for area students.

Many communities with goals of expanding non-English speaking audiences choose books that will interest and be accessible to multi-lingual populations. Bless Me Ultima, chosen by Austin, Texas for The Mayor’s Book Club was readily available in Spanish and English, and told a story that resonated with the city’s multicultural population.

Fiction vs. Non-fiction
There are differing viewpoints on the suitability of fiction vs. non-fiction works of literature for community-wide reading and discussion. Many preconceptions abound concerning the general appeal of fiction and non-fiction as literary forms. A common (and unsubstantiated) stereotype is “men like non-fiction, women like fiction.” Fiction is often considered open to wider interpretation and discussion, while non-fiction can be viewed as too constraining.

Non-fiction, especially in the form of memoir, such as Elie Wiesel’s Night (One Book, One Chicago; Spring, 2002), grips the imagination with “true life” events. Usually creative or narrative non-fiction, such as memoir, has the ability to delve into common experiences or transport the reader to an actual time and place.

Regional Significance
Many communities choose to celebrate their literary heritage by picking a book by an author from their city, state or region. The novel To Dance With the White Dog by Arkansas author Terry Kay was the choice of “If All Arkansas Read the Same Book” (2001). In 2002, “All Georgia Reading the Same Book” featured Ecology of a Cracker Childhood by Georgia author Janise Ray. Books that contain local settings or are written by “native sons and daughters” have the potential to elicit an immediate connection with the public.

Classic or Contemporary Literature
The book selection choice you make may be between classic or contemporary literature. Communities have used this initiative to celebrate classics such as The Grapes of Wrath and Farenheit 451. Readers often
rediscover classics that they have not read since high school, and others pick them up for the first time. Classics often share the advantage of the availability of ample scholarship, and the ease of high school and college curriculum tie-ins, as well as the disadvantage of unavailable or deceased authors.

Many communities have embraced the practice of introducing not-yet-classic works of literature to a wide audience. When the Washington Center for the Book selected the Russell Banks’s *The Sweet Hereafter*, and a year later Ernest Gaines’s *A Lesson Before Dying*, neither books were best-sellers, or part of school curricula. Both books were challenging reads that dealt with controversial issues through the fictional telling of a story. Many would argue that this approach to book selection has been used effectively to broaden the taste and consumption of literature by a whole community populace. If, in fifty years, these books are referred to as classics, the community-wide reading initiatives will undoubtedly receive partial credit for their longevity.

**Important Factors to Consider**

After you have narrowed down your field of choices, and before getting into a discussion of book content, issues and activities, it is important to consider whether the book is:

- in print (in the quantity you will need)
- readily available in translation, in Braille, in audio format
- available in paperback edition
- priced affordably

**Author Visit**

Before you select the book, decide how important it is to have the author visit your community. Determining whether an author visit is a part of your program vision will greatly influence which book you choose. The majority of libraries leading these initiatives have designed the program around the author’s appearance or residency in their community. However, there have been many successful programs without the live appearance. The following may influence your decision:

- Was the book selected written by a living author?
- Does your program have the budget to fund an author visit?
- Is the author available and willing to visit your community?
- Does the author have a positive track record of being an engaging public speaker?

If you are committed to hosting the author, you may want to consider such factors as the author’s public speaking skills, comfort level with audiences and crowds, and exactly what sort of programs you envision the author leading or taking part in. It is essential to confirm the author’s availability before announcing the book selection to the public. More than one library has announced the book selection only to realize that the author was unavailable or that the fee the author required was beyond their means.

Ultimately, the right book choice for your initiative will depend on your community’s interests, demographics and program goals. For a list of books selected by other communities see the Toolkit or the Library of Congress, Center for the Book “One Book Projects by State” web page ([http://www.loc.gov/loc/cfbook/](http://www.loc.gov/loc/cfbook/)). Go to the Marketing & Promotion section (page 25) for more on the Library of Congress, Center for the Book resource.
Author Confirmation

After the title has been selected, if you select a book written by a living author, contact the publisher of the book to invite the author (unless you have another contact). Most libraries contact the publisher’s publicity department director or library marketing representative. Publicity contact information can be found on the web site of most publishing companies, or on the author’s own web site. Prepare a letter of invitation that includes all details involving appearances and time commitments for the author. You may be asked to provide information about honorarium, travel and expenses. Armed with these details the publisher should be able to consult the author and respond to you within a reasonable amount of time regarding his or her availability. The publisher will also want to know how many copies of the author’s book your library will need by the program launch date in order to expedite book orders.

Good author relations are essential to the success of these programs. Do your homework. Know the author by knowing his or her body of work.

As the program director you must be able to articulate your project vision and specify your expectations for author participation. Prepare to be flexible. Things may not go exactly as you planned. You may have envisioned a keynote style speech by the author as the culmination of the campaign. The author may feel more comfortable in an interview format and may request that you find someone appropriate. As long as the lines of communication are open, surprises will be minimal.

Do not expect to deal directly with the author on every issue. Most authors can be reached through their publisher or agent. The publicity department of most publishing houses typically handles author relations. Communicate with the author contact from the beginning, specifying your expectations, plan, timeline and deadlines, as well as which details you expect to discuss with the author directly.

If you are too busy to handle author relations personally, designate one trusted individual to be the author liaison. Remember, an author is a visiting dignitary, often unfamiliar with your community. Be prepared to handle the author’s (and possibly the author escort’s) entire itinerary and every need from the minute he or she arrives to the minute he or she leaves (see Author Liaison, page 35).
Author Confirmation Checklist

☐ Send letter of invitation to author (via their publisher or agent)

☐ Schedule phone conversation to discuss details of author’s participation

☐ Negotiate letter of agreement or contract detailing author’s appearance, participation

The following items may be covered in the agreement letter, contract and/or itinerary:

- Honorarium amount
- Number of readings, lectures, book signings
- Receptions, functions, fundraisers, social gatherings the author will attend
- Provisions for meals, transportation, hospitality
- Stipulations for appearance exclusivity

☐ Request publicity materials
   (photo, bio, electronic image of book cover)

☐ Order books

☐ Make travel arrangements

☐ Secure hotel/lodging

☐ Confirm author itinerary

☐ Identify author liaison
**Programming Partnerships**

Seeking out and cultivating programming partners will not only reduce the workload but also increase the variety, breadth and depth of your programs.

Solicit programming proposals from arts and humanities groups, universities, museums and other organizations in town. By permitting others to contribute to the programming, their investment in the project becomes larger and the number of individuals invested in the project becomes larger.

The number of possible partners and programs will surprise you. Bar associations have contributed mock trials, theatrical companies have produced plays, restaurants have hosted dinners featuring book menus, film centers/theaters have shown documentaries of the period and screenings of the film version, artists have created pieces related to the selected book, and radio stations have aired read out-loud programs. The radio, in particular, has been instrumental in getting the book into the ears and minds of many. All of these experiences engage the reading audience, add to the impact of the book and create excitement around the project.

**Possible Program Partners:**

- Theater Companies
- String Ensembles
- Jazz Bands
- Big Bands
- Art Galleries
- Historical Societies
- Museums
- Professional Associations
- Community Colleges
- Universities
- Local Schools
- Dance Troupes
- Reader’s Theater Ensembles
- Storytelling Guilds
- Folk Artists
- Literacy Organizations
- Literary Magazines
- Poetry Guilds
- Fraternal Organizations
- Local Businesses
- Councils on Aging/AARP Groups
- Arts and Humanities Councils
- Minority Group Associations
- Labor Unions
- Kiwanis Clubs
- Area Churches, Synagogues, Mosques (and other religious organizations)
- Local Chapters of National Organizations (such as the ACLU, NAACP and NOW)

*and more…*
Development of Related Programming

One of the reasons these campaigns are so successful is their ability to cross societal boundaries. This effect—participation by all levels of a community—has been achieved through creative, thought-provoking and accessible related programming. A successful community-wide read goes beyond inviting everyone to read the same book; it gives them a forum in which to talk about the book and a means to access related artistic experiences (such as films and plays). If your initiative is to have impact, it needs to include well thought-out and planned programming. Look at the audience you are hoping to attract and strategize specific ways to reach that audience. Consult members of the groups you are hoping to attract, share your programming ideas with them and solicit feedback.

Community-wide reading initiatives are an opportunity to present wide-ranging humanities and arts programming such as:

Book Discussion Sessions

The community-wide read is at its essence an expansion of book discussion program models that libraries have been presenting for decades. In order to make the book accessible to the widest numbers, contact your existing book discussion groups and invite them to participate. Identify book discussion leaders to convene new groups both at the library and in unlikely places in the community. Consider having several sessions dealing with one aspect of the book during each session. Partner with schools and community centers to host book discussions as a part of their participation in the initiative. Make reading and discussion guides of the book available to members of the general public who want to start their own group.

Nancy Pearl from the Washington Center for the Book, reports that since the inception of “If All of Seattle Read the Same Book,” book discussion groups have increased in number since the beginning of the program, and their numbers have expanded even more during subsequent years of the program.

Scholarly Lectures

Lectures or panel discussions by scholars of the work or related topics can add depth to the public exchange of ideas. Scholarly programming can be especially important if the book selected is not by a living author. For example when Tompkins County Public Library (Ithaca, NY) hosted “The Great Community-Cornell Frankenstein Read” during the fall of 2002, their programming included a panel discussions of artificial intelligence and its practical applications, led by Cornell professors of Engineering, Computer Science, and Technology Education.

Author Program

Author events are typically the pinnacle of the initiative. If your community-wide read involves a visit or residency by the book’s author, this should be the highlight of your initiative. You will want to consider how to present the author to reach the widest and most appreciative audience. Many authors give public readings and lectures. There have been town meeting style book discussions, interviews with the author, writing workshops and classroom visits. Communities often find it necessary to create a number of programs around the author’s visit simply to satisfy venue constraints and audience size. Most authors marvel at the large audiences of people who have read their book and are eager to discuss it.
Exhibits
If a single picture is worth a thousand words, the value of an exhibit that incorporates relevant and related images and information is inestimable. Visual displays are an effective way to bring many of the details and related issues to the public in an accessible format that does not depend on specific scheduled events.

Arts Programming
Beyond author visits there is a wide range of arts programming possibilities. A concert presenting music of the period, region or theme of the book, for instance. Or a film series, showing the film version of the book or films typical of the time, period or genre. When the state of California read Steinbeck’s *The Grapes of Wrath* last year, film series often included documentaries on the Great Depression as well as versions of the films *Of Mice and Men*, *The Grapes of Wrath* and other classics. In Seattle, a stage version of Louis Sachar’s *Holes* was produced as part of “If All of Seattle Read the Same Book” in 2002.

Programs with Schools
Encourage teachers at local schools and colleges to use the book in their course plans. Contact teachers in your area and sponsor a book discussion workshop and send special invitations to teachers and students for book events.

Examples of Related Programming
The range of programming ideas is almost as vast as the books to be considered. The following is a selection of programs that have been offered in cities around the country.

Peoria Reads! Peoria, IL  
Book: *A Lesson Before Dying* by Ernest J. Gaines  
Program: “Life on Death Row” with John Willis, an exonerated death row convict

One Book Arizona  
Book: *Animal Dreams* by Barbara Kingsolver  
Program: “Dream Interpretation.” Join psychologist Susan Schwartz for this workshop. Her remarks will revolve around Animal Dreams, and explore how psychology and literature can reveal the meaning of dreams and how to interpret dream symbols.

One Book Arizona  
Book: *Animal Dreams* by Barbara Kingsolver  
Program: Southwestern artists Barbara Natoli and Barbara Ann Spencer Jump will discuss their work and comment on Animal Dreams and the role of art, nature and literature in Arizona life. Natoli’s work will exhibit at the library April 1–15.

United We Read, Kansas City, Mo.  
Book: *Plainsong* by Kent Haruf  
Program: “After Plainsong... More Contemporary Literature of the Plains.” There is a virtual renaissance going on in plains literature today. Join Johnson County Community College English professors for a discussion of recent plains literature
featuring novels and a variety of literary texts by award-winning regional and Native American authors.

One Book for Greater Hartford, Hartford, Conn.
Book: *Breath, Eyes, Memory* by Edwidge Danticat
Program: “Book Discussion Lottery.” Book discussion groups participating in the One Book for Greater Hartford project are eligible to enter for a chance to participate in the discussion group that meets and discusses *Breath, Eyes, Memory* with author Edwidge Danticat, Saturday morning, September 21.

One City, One Story, Pasadena, Calif.
Book: *The Soloist* by Mark Salzman
Program: “Absolut Chalk”
Stop by and help color the One City, One Story chalk mural in Centennial Square.

One City, One Book, Owatonna, Minn.
Book: *Jim the Boy* by Tony Earley
Program: “The Generations Project.” A book discussion for youth and senior citizens designed as a bridge for understanding between generations. By sharing differing perspectives in response to literature, we can glean wisdom and insight from old and young alike.

One City, One Book, Owatonna, MN
Book: *Jim the Boy* by Tony Earley
Program: “Jim-pressions.” A forum for artists to share their interpretations of the novel. Works may range from visual art and three-dimensional work to oral interpretations, or an eclectic melding of various media.

One City, One Book, Greensboro, NC
Book: *A Lesson Before Dying* by Ernest J. Gaines
Program: “Jazz, Blues & Country Music of the 40s.” In *A Lesson Before Dying*, Jefferson’s radio brings him joy and comfort. This program will feature music from the day and examine how it ties into the story.

One City, One Book, Greensboro, NC
Book: *A Lesson Before Dying* by Ernest J. Gaines
Program: “Celebration of One City, One Book.” The Episcopal Church of the Redeemer hosts a celebration of One City, One Book. This event is open to the community. A discussion of how we can address the issues raised by the book will be held immediately following the service. The discussion will be led by Pat Bailey, Ph.D., and Dee Irwin, Ph.D., of the Healing Ground Retreat Center. We hope to come up with some concrete ways we can continue the dialogue started by the One City, One Book.
Reading and Discussion Guide
The reading and discussion guide is the reader’s key to the book, related issues and the project as a whole. Pull together a team of librarians to develop materials to assist patrons in leading their own discussions. Consider scheduling training sessions for discussion leaders.

Note: The Interactive Toolkit includes “Reading Guide Resources” and “Community-Wide Read Examples.” These documents link to actual community-wide read web sites, containing a variety of excellent discussion guides, discussion leader training materials, and partnering and programming ideas.

Don’t forget to share a draft of your guide with discussion leaders before going to print and solicit their feedback on its accessibility and usability.

Your reading and discussion guide may include the following elements (see Toolkit, Reading Guide Resources):

- A summary of the project
- Calendar of project events
- Biography of the author
- Historical context for book
- Discussion questions and activities
- Critical essays on the book
- Reviews of the book, pulled quotes
- Sponsor credits and acknowledgements
- Recommended and related resources. Assemble this list with an eye to collection development.

The book may spark interest in a particular time in history, a style of writing or related subjects. Assess your collection resources and plan accordingly.

In addition to research and materials assembled by library staff, many publishers have existing discussion guides for novels that may, with the publisher’s permission, be used.

Distribution and Accessibility
Although most communities have printed discussion guides, demand can be difficult to gauge especially during the first year of the initiative. Making the discussion guide available in an easily downloadable form online is a cost effective and efficient way to get the guide into many hands. Put it on your library’s community-wide read website as soon as the initiative is announced and promote its online availability.

Consider surveying your partners and asking them to commit to a quantity for print distribution in advance. Remember that not all will have access to computer equipment to download and print the discussion guide, so some print quantity will be necessary.
Marketing & Promotion
To draw the audience you seek and create awareness about your community-wide read, your library needs to plan and implement an effective promotional campaign.

The following guidelines are intended to help you launch a successful campaign. Included are general suggestions for promotional activities and sample media materials.

Getting Started
To meet media and other deadlines, you will need to start promoting your community-wide read months in advance. To assist in planning, see Setting Your Timeline (page 8).

First, determine your target audience, goals for audience size and the best communication methods for this program based on the program goals you outlined when you began this project (Setting Program Goals, page 5). As a community-wide project, you are obviously going to use several promotional efforts to reach as many community members as possible, but you will also want to target your efforts to reach specific individuals or groups for participation in your programs and gain support for this and future library efforts. Keep your project goals in mind as you determine which groups and individuals to target with your publicity efforts.

Involving your committee in promotional planning can be a great way to start building your promotional strategy and foster new ideas, additional support and enthusiasm. Try holding a mini-workshop or brainstorming session. During this session:

- Emphasize the potential for recruiting new users and building support for the library.
- Communicate the goals for your program – what audiences you wish to reach, what you wish to accomplish.

Assign committee members with various interests/talents to carry out the tasks you develop through this session and your own planning. For more on assigning tasks, see Committee/Volunteer Positions (page 32).

Additionally, share your program plans with the library director, staff, board, Friends and other library support groups and invite their ideas and cooperation.

Defining Your Target Audience
Your general promotional materials such as flyers, press releases, and advertisements are great vehicles for reaching a general audience of mixed ages and backgrounds. There are also many specific groups in your community that will undoubtedly be very interested in your community-wide read programs, some of which you may have already contacted for programming and funding support. These groups, and others, can also assist with promotion by passing information on to members of their organization through newsletters, meetings, e-mails, posting flyers, and more. For a list of civic, religious, academic, and other organizations in your community that you may wish to consider, see Programming Partnerships (page 20).
Leveraging Support for Your Library

Your community-wide read is a major initiative that will not only build unity in your community, but also has the potential to leverage support for your library if you play your cards right. Major initiatives like community-wide reads can play an important role in building support for future library funding and public programming efforts. Consider your library’s future strategic planning. If your library is facing a referendum in the near future, you will want to take this into consideration when planning your community-wide read. You may even wish to schedule the community-wide read a few months prior to the referendum vote so library services and value to the community are fresh in the minds of voters.

Key individuals or groups in your community that you may want to contact include:
- Mayor
- City Council
- Elected officials (i.e., state and U.S. representatives/senators)
- Area business owners
- Local clergy
- Media

Personal contact (see below) via VIP invitations for community-wide read events and phone calls are the best and most effective way to reach this target audience. If these individuals attend your programs, make a concerted effort to ensure that they enjoy their experience and learn more about your library.

Selecting Communication Methods

Once you’ve determined who you would like to participate in the program, you need to focus on how you’re going to let them know about the events. Most communication methods fall into these four categories:

1. Public Relations/Publicity: newspaper and magazine articles, announcements on television and radio programs, Web sites, Web publicity, public service announcements (PSA), letters to the editor

2. Direct Marketing: direct mailings, mass e-mail messages, Web marketing

3. Personal Contact: word of mouth, public speaking engagements, telephone, e-mails, letters, VIP invitations

4. Advertising: print ads, TV and radio spots, banners, flyers, bookmarks, posters, buttons, displays

Public Relations/Publicity

Contacting the media and using the web to publicize your event is key to getting your message out to a mass audience. Here are a few methods you can use to contact your local media and through the web:

- Send a press release (also known as a news release) announcing the event to your local newspapers, radio stations and television stations at least two to four weeks before the event. If you have regional magazines or talk shows that list upcoming events, you may want to send a release to them as well. Since these media outlets often have longer lead times, send these press releases out at least four to eight weeks before the event. For a template press release you can customize and use for your community-wide read see the Toolkit.
• If possible, address press releases to a specific reporter. If you do not work with reporters regularly, call your local media outlets to find out who covers community, arts or literary events, and send your release to his/her attention. If that information is not available, address press releases to the “News Desk” for larger publications or “Editor” for smaller publications. Most media outlets prefer to receive press releases via fax; however, if you wish to send additional materials, such as a brochure or bookmark advertising the event with the release, mail is acceptable. Also, if any of these publications also have a “Calendar of Events” section, be sure to send a press release to the contact for this section. Quite often, publications will run an article about an upcoming event and include information about it in their community calendar sections.

• A week before your event, follow up by sending a media alert (also known as a press alert, media advisory, or news alert) via fax to key contacts. A sample media alert is available in the Interactive Toolkit. The alert provides specific information about the date, time and location for reporters and photographers who may be interested in attending the event or including the information in an “Upcoming Events” section. If possible, call each contact a day or two later to confirm that they received the media alert, find out if they have any questions and see if they are interested in attending or getting more information about the program.

• If you find that media professionals are interested in attending the event or in getting more information, you will need to have additional materials available in a press kit (also known as a media kit). The press kit should contain a copy of the press release, media alert, photos and biographies of the author and/or other key participants, and copies of key promotional materials – flyers, bookmarks, buttons, etc. If you do get an opportunity to discuss the event with a reporter, suggest story ideas and offer to schedule an interview with the author and/or partner organizations. (First make sure the speakers/author and partner organization representatives are willing to be interviewed.)

• Since television and radio stations are required to use a percentage of their airtime for non-profit and public announcements, your local stations may be willing to air a public service announcement (PSA) about your community-wide read. A PSA will advertise your event, but is donated airtime, so there is no cost to your library other than developing the PSA. If you are able to run a PSA, discuss creation of the piece with the station far in advance. Many stations will require that you develop the PSA while they contribute the airtime. Others will contribute both the airtime and development, or ask an on-air reporter to read the PSA. See the Interactive Toolkit for sample PSA copy.

• In today’s world, using the web to promote your events is very important. If your library’s web site doesn’t have a “Coming Events” section, talk to your webmaster about creating one. This is the perfect place for library patrons to find out details about your series, including date, time, location, program outline, etc. Also make sure you include links from your site to your partners’ and funders’ sites and the appropriate credit information.
• If you post information about the series on your library’s web site, be sure to include the web address on all promotional materials. Using just your library’s short address (e.g., www.ala.org or amazon.com) is acceptable and usually easier to read. While some promotional materials still carry the long version (e.g., http://www.ala.org), this is not necessary since most browsers are configured to automatically place the http:// before an address. However, if your library has an address with a different hyper tag, such as https://, you will need to include this in the address. Information about your community-wide read should be available or easily accessible through your library’s homepage so you do not have to print long web addresses in promotional materials.

• The web can also be useful for getting the word out about your event through your partners’ and other organizations’ web sites. Your city, community centers, local media outlets and Chamber of Commerce may post information about community events on their sites. Additionally, many major cities also have web-based entertainment and event guides, like citysearch.com or Chicago’s metromix.com, which provides information about events in several cities. Find out if these sites exist in your area and contact the site’s staff about posting your event and information. Many of these sites will post information about non-profit organizations’ events free of charge and some even have online submission forms where you can post your own event information.

Note: The “Literary Events” portion of the web site for the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress (www.loc.gov/cfbook) is a valuable resource for researching other community-wide reading programs. Updated daily by the center’s staff, the list of “One Book” projects is by state. It includes the participating city and sponsoring library, the name and date of the project, the book and author, and contact information—including a web site address if one is available. Information about projects is often cumulative; for example, each of the annual One Book projects initiated and sponsored since 1998 by Washington Center for the Book in the Seattle Public Library is described. The Center for the Book welcomes information for the list about new projects in the United States or Canada. To register your community-wide read, e-mail cfbook@loc.gov or send a fax to (202) 707-0269.

(In May 2003, the center’s web site listed the community-wide reading projects of 149 communities in 45 states, and three in Canada.)

Direct Marketing
Using the list of community organizations and other groups you identified as your target audience, you can use direct marketing to contact these groups and individual members of these organizations:

• When contacting community and other organizations, use a personalized letter or phone call. You can also send a copy of your program flyer or postcard, but if you are soliciting for financial or other support, be sure to include a personal letter and follow up with a phone call.
In addition to contacting organizations, you may want to target individuals in your community. If you keep a list of patrons’ e-mail addresses, sending a mass e-mail message about the upcoming event can be an effective and inexpensive way to get the word out to a number of people. If e-mail addresses are not available, you may want to consider creating a postcard to mail to library patrons, community members or others. There are several companies, such as Modern Postcards (www.modernpostcard.com) that create mass quantities of postcards at bargain prices. Additionally, you may want to send an e-mail message about the program to community group leaders to post to their electronic discussion groups or forward on to their own address lists.

Personal Contact
One-on-one personal contact can be one of your most effective means of communicating with key influencers and groups. It can create a better understanding and create more enthusiasm than any other communication method. Some tips:

- Send targeted individuals and groups a letter and program flyer about the event and indicate that you will call within a week to schedule a meeting to discuss further. If a meeting is not possible, when you call, ask if they have any questions about the program and if they are able to attend or pass the information along to members of their organization.

- When contacting community groups, ask whether you or a committee member may speak for 5 to 10 minutes at an upcoming meeting or event. Presentations to community groups are an inexpensive and effective ways to both deliver your message and gauge responses. At the meeting, outline your overall series plan and present convincing reasons why the series may be of interest to them. Bring flyers, bookmarks and other materials along to handout after your speech and offer to stay until the end of the meeting to answer questions.

- If speaking at a meeting is not possible, ask the group leaders to pass out flyers or mention the program to their members and staff.

Advertising
Often the most expensive promotional method, advertising can also be one of the most effective vehicles for promoting your program. Here are a few advertising methods:

- **Promotional flyers and posters** should be simple and include: the title of your community-wide read; an identifying graphic; dates, times and locations of your program(s); the title and author of the selected book; acknowledgement of funders and program partners; and if applicable, your library’s Web address. Flyers and/or posters can be posted at your library, community centers (e.g., city hall, the post office and schools, local colleges), restaurants, grocery stores, dry cleaners, bookstores, health clubs, etc. Ask Friends and trustees to post flyers and posters at their local grocery store, dry cleaners, hair salon, etc.
• **Program brochures** should contain the bulk of information about your program, including all of the information contained in your flyers/posters and descriptions and speakers for all programs and a description or additional information about the book and author. Some libraries have combined the program brochure and discussion guide - a strategy that may be more cost effective, depending on your distribution plans. Program brochures should be distributed at all personal appearances, by library Friends and trustees, at community centers, throughout the library, and in direct mail efforts and press kits.

• **Paid advertising** in local newspapers and on local radio or television stations can be another effective, but costly method. Before considering paid advertising, approach your local newspapers, radio and television stations regarding public service announcements (see Public Relations/Publicity section above). Some newspapers and broadcast stations may be willing to donate or offer discounted airtime or ad space for non-profit groups. If you do receive free advertising, acknowledge the media outlet as a sponsor on program materials. If you consider paid advertising, also look to your Friends or other groups to underwrite costs.

• Developing simple, cost effective **bookmarks, buttons** or other promotional items is another effective way to promote your event. These promotional items can also double as a “freebie” for patrons who attend the community-wide read events. Hand out promotional items at schools, community group meetings or other locations. Ask Friends and trustees to hand out bookmarks and buttons to their friends and others.

**Putting It All Together**

After reviewing this list, spend a little time thinking about which of these methods will work best for your event, your community and your library. Consider your budget, time available, and planning committee resources. And, consider your library’s past cultural programming successes and failures by taking a look at which communication methods you’ve used to promote past events. For this effort, you may want to combine some successful methods you’ve used before with some new ideas from this guide and other sources.

It is very easy to get carried away with promotion, especially with an effort such as a community-wide read, which is aimed at reaching the largest possible audience—your entire community. However, by spending some time planning out your promotional strategy before you begin, you will use the minimum of funds, time and other resources to reach the maximum audience.
During Program Week/Month
By the beginning of your programming series the following activities are taking place:

- Promotional materials are distributed, reprints ordered
- Discussion groups are meeting
- Print ads are running, radio promotion is airing
- Author’s itinerary is confirmed
- Other programs and speakers are confirmed
- Website is updated with any last-minute changes

You may have been meeting with your committee and volunteers monthly or bi-weekly. More frequent meetings, weekly, daily, may now be necessary. Some coordinators establish a “head quarters” or “command central” and require that all key volunteers or committee members check in at least once a day in person or via phone during program week/month. Keeping “command central” stocked with beverages and snacks helps keep morale up too!

Community-Wide Read Program Team
No matter how small the community, no program director can be everywhere at once, simultaneously taking care of logistics and set-up, author hospitality and media relations, evaluations and book sales. A team of volunteers, co-workers, committee members, and Friends is invariably necessary. After months of careful planning, you should have your team in place. By the week(s) of the community-wide reading programming, you may find yourself with volunteers ranging from high school students, to book discussion participants to library trustees.

The individuals on the planning committee should understand from the beginning of the process that they will be hands-on volunteers—and in many cases—volunteer coordinators during the intense activity period of the community-wide read. The contribution of committee members takes not just the form of helpful advice, research and enthusiasm, but also working hours in the field.

As you plan the community-wide read, identify the particular jobs that may suit individual committee members. These jobs will range from book ordering and inventory, to volunteer recruitment, author liaison, hospitality, press relations, audio visual set-up, and signage—just to name a few (see next section for Committee/Volunteer Positions).
Committee/Volunteer Positions
These may be distinct volunteer jobs, combined for appropriate people or part of individual staff duties. The following is a list of jobs that you may need to fill during and around the community-wide read programming:

Venue Coordinator
This person, or team of two people, is in charge of the program venue—be it a film screening, lecture, theatrical presentation or author reading. Venue coordinators are in charge of making sure the room is prepared for the expected audience, chairs are set up, necessary audio visual equipment has been ordered, delivered and is in functioning order, signage has been posted, refreshments have been delivered, evaluation forms are ready for volunteer distribution and a sufficient number of volunteers have signed up to work at the event. Venue coordinators are bound to their program sites—they are the first to arrive and the last to leave.

Volunteer Coordinator
This person, or team of two people, contacts every person who has signed up to volunteer during the community-wide read, provides training (for more complicated positions, e.g. Book sales), schedules volunteer shifts, provides names and contact information to all of their corresponding venue coordinators, places confirmation calls the day before the event and confirms their participation with their venue coordinators. Many volunteer coordinators are active recruiters and are selected for this ability as well.

Signage Coordinator
This person should be adept at creating readable, consistent, attractive signage for each of the events. This person should either be capable of working with the graphics contained on this CD to create signage or with the graphic designer who creates the signage you need. The signage coordinator visits each of the program venues to gain an understanding of traffic flow, signage placement, and venue idiosyncrasies and creates a list of needed signage. They then consult with the program director to decide on the necessary and effective number of signs and budget (see page 38 for list of possible signs). The signage coordinator is in charge of creating the necessary signs for each venue, or working with the designer to create them, producing them (or dropping them at a copy shop), coordinating their delivery to the venue coordinators, and, if necessary reviewing signage placement specifics with the venue coordinators.

Remember good signage makes all the difference in efficient audience handling and communication at any event—especially events where volunteers are not overly abundant. Not all libraries will need a signage coordinator who performs all of the duties listed above. The printing and/or design of signage is often received through in-kind donations or produced in-house. If this is the case at your library, just make sure you have someone who can work closely with the designers, producers and copywriters involved to make sure the signage is consistent and accurate.

Program Volunteers
Duties for volunteers who work at the programs include ushering, ticket collecting, book sales, A/V operation, refreshment service, and manning information tables. Depending on your library’s resources, volunteers can be particularly useful in distribution of flyers throughout your community, and leading book
discussions, in the weeks preceding the programs. Your volunteer coordinator should create a list of duties in conjunction with other committee coordinators and find volunteers to fill these positions.

**Introducers**
Depending on the abundance of your programs, you may want to draft a number of individuals to serve as program introducers. As program director you may prefer to write all introductions. If this is not the case, the introducers should be able to write and deliver thoughtful introductions, as well as moderate question and answer sessions, and make last minute announcements. It is vitally important that program sponsors and funders be thanked at every program and that each introducer receives a prepared text detailing and acknowledgements and “thank yous.” Be sure to ask your introducers if they are comfortable speaking before an audience, before signing them on for the job.

**Hospitality/Refreshments Coordinator**
This person is in charge of ordering and securing any and all refreshments for programs. They order them (or secure in-kind donations), deliver them (or coordinate their delivery) and are responsible for returning any plates or equipment to the vendor. The hospitality/refreshment coordinator should work with venue coordinators to determine refreshment set-ups and location. If expected refreshments are not at a program site, the venue coordinator will call the refreshments coordinator to solve the problem. If you are going to have a hospitality room or “green room” at any of the programs, the hospitality coordinator should be present or should train a volunteer to set up and administer the “green room.”

**Evaluations Coordinator**
This person is in charge of distributing, collecting, and in some cases creating the program evaluations (see page 41). The evaluations coordinator ensures that each program site is furnished with sufficient evaluations (and pencils) for the expected audience, that the volunteers and/or venue coordinators have been instructed on distribution and collection. The evaluations coordinator will work with the program director to review the evaluations, tabulate the results, gather anecdotes for the final report and create an evaluation report.

**Troubleshooters**
These people are, often, your most important link to a smooth running program. Troubleshooters are the people with a car who are able to make scheduled and unscheduled pick-ups of anything, from equipment and books to signs and speakers. They are available during prearranged critical activity times throughout the program run. They are resourceful and flexible and possess more than the ordinary degree of common sense.

**Media Coordinator**
This person is often the library’s media relations coordinator, public relations or public information manager. If the program director and the media officer are one in the same, then you will want to designate someone on the committee to be your on-site media liaison. By program time, all the ads have been placed, the media has been pitched and you have some indication of who will be coming to cover the event. The media coordinator works with the program director to arrange convenient interview times for the author, program director and board members. This person also places last minute confirmation
calls to media outlets that have either indicated that they would attend or were unable to commit until the last minute. The media coordinator will need to be accessible at all times before and during the program and should be equipped with a cell phone (that number should be on all media alerts) to ensure on-site accessibility, as well (For additional media tips see Marketing & Promotion, page 25).

The media coordinator will set up a media table outside each program and ask members of the media to check in, ensure that they have seats, take care of simple questions and facilitate interactions with interview subjects. If this is an author program, the media coordinator should discuss interviews with the author and his/her publicist in advance of the event to ensure determine whether the author has any interview guidelines or restrictions, and make sure he/she is available for at least an hour after the program. The media coordinator will be aware of the author or speaker’s preferences and ensure their enforcement at the event.

Books Coordinator
Book sales for community-wide reads are handled in a variety of ways. Some libraries sell the books, with Friends of the Library, organizations handling book sales, or contract with a local book store to coordinate on-site sales and ordering. If your library already has a tradition of hosting large author events that include book sales, then your mechanism for book ordering and distribution will be in place. Otherwise, you will want to decide far in advance who will handle the sales. The person who will be ordering books should be on your committee and actively involved in strategizing the logistics of getting the books to the program venues and selling the volumes. If, for some reason, the person handling the orders cannot be on the committee, you must designate a committee member to work closely with the book store or Friends group to take on that responsibility.

Since monetary transactions are involved, the books coordinator should be in charge of cash box distribution and book sales. If the book coordinator is not available to sell all of the books themselves, they should work with the volunteer coordinator to specially designate and train volunteers to handle sales at each venue. The books coordinator should have some understanding of the book ordering and “returns” process. The job of the books coordinator is not finished until the last unsold book is returned to the publisher for refund or credit and the sales are tallied and reported.

Author Liaison
If you are hosting an author as part of your community-wide read, this person or team of no more than two people is in charge of your VIP. We recommend no more than two people fill this role because it is disorienting enough for authors to have to arrive in an unfamiliar community without having to go from handler to handler every day. As program director, you will doubtlessly have many volunteers for this position – you may even want to be the author liaison yourself. If you as director, are satisfied that you have successfully delegated every aspect of the campaign to responsible hands, and that you will be able to escort the author without distractions or interruptions, then perhaps it will be a job for you. Otherwise, you may want to look for the following qualifications when selecting your author liaison(s):

- They are utterly prompt and dependable, able to keep things on your timetable.
- They are excellent communicators, both with the author and you.
• They are diplomats—able to intervene politely and diplomatically when the author is falling behind schedule, or if a persistent fan is compromising his/her time.

• They are not star-struck fans. This is not the position for the author’s biggest fan on your committee. The author liaison should have read the book, of course, but this is not a job for someone who is hoping to get some undivided time with the author. This is a position for someone who can make sure that the author will leave your community feeling that he/she has been well received, well taken care of, and that his/her dignity and personal space has been respected.

• They have a clean, working car.

Some authors may have their own escort or assistant. You will still want to designate someone to help these individuals get around your community, answer their questions, etc. However, this person will not be expected to be in constant contact with the author as he/she would if the author were traveling alone.

Note: Many larger communities have professional author escorts who regularly work with publishing companies to chaperone authors to book stores and public functions. If you are have one of these individuals on your committee, you may want to talk to them about doing the job, or at least, ask them for some pointers for your designated author liaison.

Be sure to review the itinerary and timetable with your author liaison. Make sure they understand the extent of their time commitment. The author liaison should, of course, have all of your phone numbers, the phone number of the author’s publicist, and any other key players.

Event Checklist

The following page has an event checklist that may be helpful to your planning process. (See the Toolkit for a blank version of the checklist.) As program director, you will have a checklist for each program, and individual event checklists will be the most vital piece of information furnished to every venue coordinator.
Event Checklist

Venue Coordinator: Alyssa Carlson

Name of Event: One Book, One Community Evening with Ernest Gaines
Venue: Centertown Public Library
Address: 1 E. Main Street, Centertown

Date of Event: June 1
Time of Event: 6:00 p.m.  Doors Open Time: 5:30 p.m.

Room Set-Up: Audience Style seating
15 rows of 30 with aisle down the middle
Literature table at the back of the room to the right of the entrance

Stage Set-Up: Podium center stage
Small table next to podium
Two chairs at rear of stage to left of podium
Water pitcher with two glasses placed on table
Community-wide read logo on front of podium
Enlarged poster of author's book cover on table easel

A/V Requirements: One podium microphone
Auditorium and stage lights on

Speakers: Jane Dorne, Library Director, (ph.) 555-555-5555 (c)
Ernest Gaines, author (escorted by Bea Redding, (ph.) 555-555-5555 (c)

Event Format: Reading and Talk

Details: Library Director will introduce author – 5 min.
Author will give reading and talk – 45 min
Library Director will moderate audience Q & A – 15-20 min.
Library Director will thank author and direct audience to book sale
and signing outside auditorium – 45 min.
Speaker Info: Both speakers are scheduled to arrive 20 minutes before the show. They should be ushered to the conference room across the hall from the auditorium’s west entrance.

Book Sales: The Friends of the Library will be assisting Books And More Books with book sales. The book sales and book signing table is outside the auditorium. After the event, the author should be escorted to the book signing table.

Signage: Post the following signs in the auditorium 45 minutes before the event:

3 signs - “Community-Wide Reading Event in Auditorium at 8 p.m.” – post on both entrances to the library, on entrance from parking lot

2 signs - “Community-Wide Reading Event in Auditorium at 8 p.m.”

1 sign - “Community-Wide Reading Event in Auditorium at 8 p.m.” with down arrow – post at top of escalator

Volunteers:

Usher: Elizabeth Johnson – ph: 555-555-5555
Usher: George Ramos – ph: 555-555-5555
Info Table: Jennifer Levine – ph: 555-555-5555
Press Table: Mark Brown – ph: 555-555-5555

Volunteers will arrive and check in with venue coordinator 45 minutes before start of event. Each of the volunteers are scheduled to stay until venue close, except for Elizabeth Johnson who will be catching a ride home with her mother after the program.

Media Contact: Amber Weiss, cell ph: 555-555-5555
She will set up the press table at the entrance to the auditorium.

Other: Jane Cyanic will be dropping off vegetable platters at 5:00 p.m. They will need to be stored in the conference room refrigerator until after the event, and placed on the refreshments table five-ten minutes before the event ends for the audience to enjoy during the book signing.
**Signage**

Good programs have easy to understand, strategically placed signs. When a program attendee arrives at a venue, they should be able to find the program room, bathroom, and book sales easily and quickly, as soon as they walk through the door. If basic information is clearly posted, program volunteers will be able to concentrate on answering the public’s more specific and complicated questions, and complete other tasks at hand. Remember, all directional, logistical signs should pass the “Can I read it from across the room?” test. Also, you may need duplicate signage if there is more than one venue entrance.

**Sponsors**

In addition to announcements, every event should have a prominently displayed poster sign appropriately listing all program sponsors, and in some cases, their logos. The larger this sign, the better.

**Program Changes**

Along with verbal announcements, posting the most current time, location, speaker and other program changes on a well-placed sign or dry erase board at all events, will effectively help spread the word to an audience already making an effort to attend.

**Cancelled**

A program director from Chicago says that if you always create a “Cancelled” sign and have it ready in case of an emergency, you will never need to use it. With that superstition in mind, we recommend that every venue coordinator have a “Cancelled” sign ready... just in case. Be ready to pull it out at a moment’s notice.

**Here is a list of additional signs that are often useful at library programs:**

- Book Sales Here
- Book Price
- Forms of payment accepted
- Please have your $$ ready
- (Author’s name) has agreed to sign a maximum of 2 books per person
- (Author’s name) will sign books until 8:00 p.m.
- Line forms (arrow)
- Doors open at 6 p.m.
- Reserved seats released ten minutes prior to start of show
- Press Check-in
- Reserved tickets
- Will Call
- Drop your completed evaluations here
- Information
- Quiet please, program in progress
- Other community-wide read events:
- Restroom location; Handicapped restroom location
- Join Friends of the Library
- Volunteer at other community-wide read events
- Join the library’s email list for updates on other public programs
- Local businesses – Want to be involved in sponsoring next year’s read?
  Drop your business card in and we’ll contact you.
**Documenting Events**

Without a doubt, there will be plenty of newspaper clippings and even television footage of your community-wide reading initiative. However, you will still want to create your library’s own audio and visual record of the successful programs and the exciting moments surrounding them. Photographs, especially, will prolong the excitement, allow participants to remember their enjoyment, and assist in reports and requests to sponsors and funders.

**Photographs**

Whether your library has a budget to hire a professional photographer, or you have designated a committee member to be the “official photographer,” you will want to meet with the photographer to review the list of “must have” shots and strategize time spent at each program.

With your committee, come up with an advance list of moments, or images that you would like to have in the photographic archive. These images may include:

- The author with library patrons
- Speakers talking to a full house at the program
- A group discussing the book
- The mayor with the speakers/author/program committee
- Dignitaries, speakers, author with a sponsor
- A happy family enjoying a program
- A line of patrons checking out the book
- A patron sitting and reading the book
- The program committee/dignitary/speaker below the banner in front of the library
- A welcoming crowd
- Patrons enjoying a related exhibit or display in the library
- Attendees at related partner programs
- Dancers or musical groups performing at related programs

**Audio or Video Recording**

If you have access to or a budget for professional recording equipment, a video or audio recording of key events can be an enriching and popular addition to the library’s collection. Local radio or television stations may be interested in simulcasting the programs and making the recording available to the library collection, or re-broadcasting the programs. Plans to record the author/speaker presentation should be approved by the speakers in advance. TV or radio involvement should be coordinated well in advance, but can be an excellent way to reach remote and shut-in audiences.

Many libraries have made excellent use of their web pages to display photographs, video, and audio files of the events.
Final Report
In addition to documenting for your library and community, you should also consider keeping a pad of paper with you at programs and throughout the initiative that you can use to jot down ideas or what is and is not working. Consider requiring venue coordinators to record attendance, demographic and anecdotal information on a report form after the completion of each program.

After the initiative is over, sort through your notes, and reports from venue coordinators, and construct a record of successes and challenges encountered at each program. Also solicit feedback from the program committee, volunteers, and staff members. By creating a report on the program while the information is still fresh in your mind, you will avoid headaches and build on your successes in the next initiative. This report may be some thing you want to distribute to all involved, or keep as an internal document.
**Evaluation**

Determining the impact, effectiveness and scope of your initiative is a great challenge when you are in the thick of the program.

The following evaluation forms, one from the Chicago Public Library and one from Greensboro Public Library, were available at community-wide read programs and on the library website for participants to complete online.

We have included both forms to share two different approaches to evaluation. The Chicago Public Library evaluation form asks fewer questions and is designed to encourage sharing of anecdotal information. The Greensboro Public library evaluation form asks for detailed demographic information and poses issues-oriented questions.

Consider both approaches and decide what works best for your community—perhaps a combination of the two. Decide what sort of information will best assist you and the planning committee in assessing the impact of the initiative and building a case for future support.
Spring 2003 One Book, One Chicago
Evaluation Form

How did you hear about the One Book, One Chicago program?

Have you participated in One Book, One Chicago before?

If not, why did you decide to participate this time?

How did you participate?

___ Read the book

___ Attended a book discussion

___ Attended a special program

___ Other
**Participant Evaluation**

1. How much of the book, *A Lesson Before Dying*, have you read?
   - ☐ All of it
   - ☐ Some of it
   - ☐ None of it

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. I enjoyed reading the book
3. I learned something new in reading the book
4. I feel that the book gave me a better understanding of issues such as racism, discrimination and oppression

Please indicate how much the following statements are true for you:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>A little</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>A lot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. I have talked about the book with my friends or family
6. I have talked about the book with people I don't usually talk with
7. I have talked about the book with people who are of a different race than I am

Please indicate how much the following statement is true regarding the book discussion group you just attended.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. The discussion was meaningful

9. (a) From your standpoint, what was the most important issue brought up during the discussion?
   (b) How much did the discussion increase your understanding about this issue? (Circle one response)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>A little</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>A lot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. How interested would you be in reading other books and continuing your conversations as part of the *One City, One Book* project? (Circle one response)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>A little</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>A lot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do you have any recommendations for another book for our city to read?

11. What is your gender? (circle)
    - Female
    - Male

12. What is your age? (circle)
    - 18-24
    - 25-35
    - 36-50
    - 50+

13. Which ethnic background do you most identify yourself with? (circle)
    - African-American
    - Asian
    - Hispanic/Latino
    - Native American
    - Caucasian
    - Multi-racial
    - Other

14. Comments:

Thank you!

If you do not have time to answer these questions now, please do so within the next three days and fax the form to (336) 555-6781 or mail the form to Steve Sumerford, Greensboro Public Library, 219 N. Church Street, Greensboro, NC 27402.

*Evaluation used with permission of Greensboro Public Library*
Wrap-Up/Post Program Checklist

☐ Distribution of archival materials (audio/video tapes, press release) to branches, media

☐ Post-program meeting for organizers

☐ Thank-you letters to funders, sponsors, and participants

☐ Post-event marketing

☐ Analysis of evaluations, circulation statistics

☐ Final Report: results, lessons learned, recommendations for next time