



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** ORD. 2023-296, **Version:** 1

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To amend Ord. No. 2023-071, adopted May 8, 2023, which adopted the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 General Fund Budget and made appropriations pursuant thereto, to (i) transfer \$20,000.00 from the Non-Departmental agency Reserve for Children's Fund line item (ii) create a new line item entitled "Read to Them (for FY24 Imagination Library RVA)" in the Non-Departmental agency, and (iii) appropriate such \$20,000.00 to such new line item in the Non-Departmental agency, for the purpose of supporting the expansion of Imagination Library RVA in the city of Richmond.

THE CITY OF RICHMOND HEREBY ORDAINS:

§ 1. That Article I, Section 1 of Ordinance No. 2023-071, adopted May 8, 2023, which adopted a General Fund Budget for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2023, and ending June 30, 2024, and made appropriations pursuant thereto, is hereby amended by

(a) Transferring \$20,000.00 from the Non-Departmental agency Reserve for Children's Fund line item for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2023, and ending June 30, 2024;

(b) Creating a new line item in the Non-Departmental agency entitled "Read to Them (for FY24 Imagination Library RVA)" and

(c) Appropriating the funds in the amount of \$20,000.00 transferred by subsection (a) of this section to the new line item in the Non-Departmental agency created by subsection (b) of this section entitled "Read to Them (for FY24 Imagination Library RVA)" for the purpose of supporting the expansion of Imagination Library RVA in the city of Richmond.

§ 2. This ordinance shall be in force and effect upon adoption.

O&R REQUEST

DATE: September 7, 2023

EDITION: 1

TO: The Honorable Members of City Council

THROUGH: The Honorable Levar M. Stoney, Mayor  
THROUGH: J.E. Lincoln Saunders, Chief Administrative Officer  
THROUGH: Sabrina Joy-Hogg, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer for Finance and Administration  
THROUGH: Sheila White, Director of Finance  
THROUGH: Jason May, Director of Budget and Strategic Planning  
THROUGH: Traci Deshazor, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer for Human Services

FROM: Eva Colen, Office of Children and Families

RE: Reserve for Children's Fund Reappropriation for Read To Them (for FY24 Imagination Library RVA)

ORD. OR RES. No.

PURPOSE: To amend Ord. No. 2023-071, adopted May 8, 2023, which adopted the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 General Fund and made appropriations pursuant thereto, to (i) transfer \$20,000 from the Non-Departmental agency, Reserve for Children's Fund line item (ii) create a new line item entitled "Read To Them (for FY24 Imagination Library RVA)", and (iii) appropriate such \$20,000 to such new line item in the Non-Departmental agency, for the purpose of supporting the expansion of Imagination Library RVA in the City of Richmond.

REASON: With this \$20,000 allocation from the City's Non-Departmental agency, Reserve for Children's Fund, the City will partner with Read To Them to grow Imagination Library RVA, the local Dolly Parton Imagination Library program, in order to provide more children under 5 in Richmond with a new book each month.

RECOMMENDATION: Approval is recommended by City Administration

**BACKGROUND:**

Read to Them (RTT) has operated the One Book, One School program since 2002. Since its founding, RTT has expanded its family literacy programs to meet school, district and state-wide needs across the US in accordance with its mission to use the power of reading aloud together to build connections across families, schools, and communities to cultivate students' learning and success.

Since launching in 1995, Dolly Parton's Imagination Library has become the preeminent early childhood book gifting program in the world. The flagship program of The Dollywood Foundation has gifted well over 209 million free books. The program's impact has been widely researched, and results suggest positive increases in key early childhood literacy metrics.

## IMAGINATION LIBRARY RVA

Committed to ensuring all 13,352 children under the age of five have foundational literacy knowledge upon starting kindergarten, Read to Them (RTT) established a partnership with Dolly Parton's Imagination Library (DPIL). Imagination Library RVA was launched in July 2023. For additional information visit [www.ImaginationLibraryRVA.org](http://www.ImaginationLibraryRVA.org)

Through this partnership, every child in Richmond under 5 is eligible to participate at no cost to the child's family. Every registered child will receive a free, new, age-appropriate book every month delivered to their home until they turn five years of age. As the administrator, RTT is responsible for paying for the cost of the books and postage, as well as program administration costs. RTT is also responsible for building awareness, managing enrollment and delivery coordination. Recognizing that families experiencing poverty can be difficult to reach, RTT has established relationships with Richmond Public Libraries, Richmond Public Schools, Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority, and other local agencies to increase awareness of Imagination Library. RTT also works with the United States Postal Service to ensure books are delivered to correct addresses and so that families experiencing transition can continue to receive their books each month. As part of the partnership with the City of Richmond's Office of Children and Families, RTT is forming an Equity Council to guide future planning and implementation in order to ensure that the program is accessible to Richmond families who can least afford to build home libraries for their children.

In addition to administering the book distribution program, RTT will leverage its experience to support families to build a habit of reading at home by connecting participants to a suite of resources that support engagement with the books.

RTT aims to enroll approximately 30 percent of the eligible population - about 3900 children - by the end of Fiscal Year 2024. To accomplish this goal, RTT must raise \$51,480 for its share of the cost of books and postage; RTT is also fundraising to support the cost of administration and promotion to ensure equitable access to the program. Given early enthusiasm for the program - from its launch in June until early August, over 1400 children signed up - it is likely that the only barrier to hitting enrollment goals will be funding. As funding allows, RTT will enroll as many children as possible.

## COSTS

DPIL covers all overhead and administrative expenses at no cost to local affiliates and partners, provides the Book Order System database and technical support, coordinates the Blue Ribbon Book Selection Committee, and coordinates monthly book orders and fulfillment through USPS. RTT, as the local affiliate, is responsible for enrollment, payment toward the costs of wholesale book orders and shipping (\$2.20 per child per month), and local promotion. The local costs are shared 50-50 with the Commonwealth of Virginia thanks to the inclusion of \$1,157,065 in the state budget for FY24.

## THE CITY'S INVESTMENT

90 percent of a \$20,000 City grant will go directly to the cost of books and postage, supporting a year's worth of books for 1363 Richmond children. 10 percent will go toward administrative costs associated with personnel, outreach, and community engagement, including the facilitation of an Equity Council to ensure every child has an equitable opportunity to access Imagination Library RVA.

Robins Foundation made an off-cycle grant of \$25,000 in June 2023 to support the launch of the program. An anonymous donor has pledged an additional \$20,000 per year for five years, commencing in fall 2023.

FISCAL IMPACT / COST: \$20,000

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS: This will reduce the Reserve for Children's Fund appropriation in the FY24 Non-Departmental budget category by \$20,000.

BUDGET AMENDMENT NECESSARY: Yes

REVENUE TO CITY: None

DESIRED EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon adoption

REQUESTED INTRODUCTION DATE: October 10, 2023

CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING DATE: November 13, 2023

REQUESTED AGENDA: Consent

RECOMMENDED COUNCIL COMMITTEE: Education and Human Services Standing Committee

CONSIDERATION BY OTHER GOVERNMENTAL ENTITIES: N/A

AFFECTED AGENCIES: Finance, Budget and Strategic Planning, Human Services - Non-departmental Agency, Human Services - Office of Children and Families

RELATIONSHIP TO EXISTING ORD. OR RES.: Ord. No. 2023-071

REQUIRED CHANGES TO WORK PROGRAM(S): N/A

ATTACHMENTS: N/A

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