



Overview

Nebraska Growing Readers (NGR) is a big solution for providing exposure to reading to Nebraska's youngest children. NGR is designed to create access to relevant books for all children birth to age five, regardless of location within the state. Before this decade ends, NGR aims to transform the literacy landscape of our state and aspires to cultivate a love of reading in communities by fostering an early love for books and shared reading, to develop "book gardens" (easily accessible distribution sites for books) across our state, and, most of all, to remind parents that they are their child's first teacher.

Goals

Every Nebraska farmer knows that growing a successful crop begins by preparing the soil. Our first task then will be cultivating a reading landscape by pinpointing book deserts (areas where books are not easily accessible to families) and working with our partners to flatten structural barriers that have blocked access to children's books in historically underserved communities. We will utilize our current early childhood platform, Sixpence, to put relevant picture books within reach of all Nebraskan families. Our goals are:

1. Expand access to books for early care and education providers.
2. Support the adoption of shared book reading in home, early care, and educational settings.
3. Increase access to culturally and linguistically responsive books that reflect Nebraska's diverse population.

Strategies

Nebraska Children and Families Foundation and the Nebraska Department of Education will partner to improve early literacy rates and build meaningful adult-child relationships by using books and high-impact family engagement as catalysts for change. Nebraska is poised to become the nation's most extensive book garden.

Nebraska Growing Readers initiative creates an integrated, statewide system of support by:

- Creating access to relevant books for targeted early care and education providers serving children and families from birth to age five.
- Systematically deliver relevant picture books to each early care and education providers, creating community distribution sites.
- Create and implement a statewide campaign to improve family engagement strategies that propagate new community norms of shared book reading.
- Use data and interactive mapping tools to monitor progress and to provide a feedback loop for stakeholders and childcare providers.
- Intentionally address the need for relevant books that reflect the cultures and languages of Nebraska's Tribal Communities and diverse populations.



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