



Guide to Your LFDL

Getting Started:

❑ Step One: Identify a Location & Steward

- ❑ First, identify where you can legally and safely install the library. The location should have a lot of foot traffic and be highly visible to anyone nearby. Then, identify at least one person to be the steward (i.e., caretaker). This person promotes the library and makes sure it is clean and inviting.

❑ Step Two: Get a Library

- ❑ Build your own Library or purchase one from [LittleFreeLibrary.org](https://www.littlefreelibrary.org)
- ❑ If you purchase: you will need a Library Box (finished or unfinished), post (you can build this yourself if you do not want to purchase), charter sign, and/or tribute plaque.
- ❑ If you build your own library: make sure to order a [Charter Sign](#) so you can register your library on the world map
- ❑ Customize your charter sign example: “Amplify and Empower Diverse Voices”
- ❑ Once your library arrives, it is time to decorate and make it your own! It is typically easier to paint the post and library box separately before assembling it all together.
- ❑ Once the library box and post are painted, you can add the finishing touch: the charter sign and/or tribute plaque. Make sure the charter sign is in the front of the library.

❑ Step Three: Register Your Library

- ❑ Add your Little Free Diverse Library to the [world map](#) on the Little Free Library website! Now others can come find your LFDL.

❑ Step Four: Tell others in the Community about your LFDL

- ❑ Get your community involved! Tell your friends, family, and neighbors. Use social media to engage your community with the library and be sure to follow [@LittleFreeDiverseLibraries](#) and [@LittleFreeLibrary](#) on Instagram. The more people who know about your library and support it, the better.
- ❑ [Sample press release from Little Free Library.](#)

❑ Step Five: Celebrate the opening of your LFDL

- ❑ Invite others in your community (socially distanced) to see the new installation of your Little Free Diverse Library! Celebrate with a ribbon cutting, balloons, or library reveal.

FAQs

Q) How does the library actually work?

- A) The library runs on the honor system. The saying goes, "Take a Book and Leave a Book" or "Take a Book and Share a Book" but you do not need to leave a book in order to take one. If someone is not able to leave a book, it's still fine for them to take a book! However, when someone takes a book or two, there is a hope and expectation that they will later bring other books to share to that same library or another library in the area.

Q) What if someone brings a book back and there is no room for it?

- A) You'll be surprised how many books people will try to make fit into your library. Libraries start out looking quite organized, but enthusiastic book donors tend to shove books into every last inch of the space. This is where the steward comes in. The steward should conduct a weekly check-in to see what books need to be added (are there only children's books? Only adult books?), what books can be saved for back stock (are there duplicates?), and what books don't meet the diverse criteria (great book, but does not align with the LFDL mission - can I find another Little Free Library for this book?).

Q) Are there rules you need to establish for the library and are they written out for the community?

For example, "Books should be borrowed for no more than a week."

- A) Placing a sticker, label, or stamp in each book (especially new books) can be very helpful! At the end of the day, your LFDL is free for the community. Books will leave and never return...and that's ok! Here's an example of a label that Little Free Diverse Libraries uses: *"This book has been selected to amplify and empower diverse voices. Please enjoy it, take care of it, share it and return it. Follow @LittleFreeDiverseLibraries on Instagram for more information"*

Q) What paint should I use on my library?

- A) Before you paint, start by applying a coat of primer. Primer is designed to bond well with wood. For wood libraries, you can use a standard house paint (water-based or oil-based paints will both work fine). Home Depot, Lowes, and many paint stores like Benjamin Moore or Ace Hardware offer 8oz paint samples ranging from \$3-\$10. This amount of paint usually can cover the entire library box and post. No coats of varnish or sealant are needed if you're using house paint. Note from Little Free Library: "The only time we recommend using varnish is if you painted your library with acrylic paints that aren't designed for outdoor use. You could choose to stain your library instead, but it won't last as long as paint will."

Q) How many books fit in the library?

- A) About 15-25. You want the library to be "shoppable," meaning people can easily look through the books and see what is available. You might do this by making sections with adult books on one side and children's books on the other.

Q) My library has no books, what do I do?

- A) We hope that people will return their books or bring back other books, but sometimes libraries empty out! It is a good idea to keep 10-15 books aside as a back-up to fill your Little Free Diverse Library just in case it gets wiped out. However, if you find that you are out of books, there are many different ways to acquire more for your library. You could host a book drive, create an Amazon wishlist, or reach out to authors and publishers for book donations.

Q) I am worried no one will take a book because COVID-19 what do I do?

- A) For the most part, if someone is uncomfortable taking a book due to COVID health reasons, they won't! One way to make others feel more comfortable is to include a hand sanitizer container, gloves, and/or wipes. For more information on best practices regarding COVID, click [here](#).

Q) I still have questions, what can I do?

- B) We are working to organize a network for all LFDLs to connect, share tips and ideas, and provide feedback. You can always reach out to the team at Little Free Diverse Libraries via email (LFdiverselibrary@gmail.com). We are here to support you and want to see your library be the best it can be!

*The Little Free **Diverse** Libraries Manifesto*

We believe that **Black** lives matter. **Black** stories matter. **Black** history matters. **Black** childhood matters. **Black** joy matters. **Black** sorrow matters. **Black** voices matter.

We believe that all children deserve to see themselves and diverse others represented in literature.

We believe that children of color deserve to see themselves represented in ordinary stories in which a character's race is not their defining characteristic.

We believe in revising the canon of children's literature to feature authors of color and texts that portray a diverse range of experience.

Follow @LittleFreeDiverseLibraries on Instagram for more information.

Paste inside window/front of library:

Please help us keep this Little Free Library filled with books authored by people of color and representing people of color. To donate to the Little Free Diverse Libraries Project or get involved, please go to ***@LittleFreeDiverseLibraries on Instagram***



Little Free Diverse Libraries (LFDL) aims to bring diverse stories written by BIPOC authors to Little Free Libraries across the United States. All donations go towards purchasing books from Black-owned bookstores.

Fueled by the current tide of civil justice, LFDL is set on normalizing diverse stories and bringing narratives to the forefront, especially for Black and Brown youth, who so often cannot find role models in today's media and literature. LFDL was created by Sarah Kanya on June 3, 2020, in her hometown of Arlington, MA when she witnessed a Free Little Library in her own neighborhood and wished she had a similar resource in her youth.

Kanya, is a child of an Ugandan immigrant, has a Masters degree from NYU in Counseling and Guidance in Schools K-12 and now works at P.S. 191, a K-8 Title 1 Public School in New York City as a School Counselor. What started as a passion project turned into a small movement. In 30 days Kanya raised over \$13,000, purchased 675 books, and has now sent over 2,000 diverse books to Little Free Libraries in all 50 states. As the project continues, Kanya hopes to continue to amplify and empower diverse voices, one book at a time.

*On July 6, 2020 the Kanya family welcomed the first ever Little Free **Diverse** Library to their front yard.*

For more information follow on Instagram @LittleFreeDiverseLibraries