



New Youth-Centered Free Statewide eBook Library To Be Created

\$1.5 million investment by the California State Library inaugurates a digital library open to all Californians

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[Sacramento, Calif.] Using \$1.5 million in one-time federal emergency COVID-relief funds, the California State Library is creating a statewide collection of over 40,000 eBooks for early learners and school-age children that will be available to every Californian with a library card. Through this project, every California resident – regardless of zip code -- can access thousands of digital fiction and nonfiction books – even if they aren't physically able to visit their local library.

"This is the kind of 24-7 access Californians both expect and need, particularly as we recover from the pandemic," said State Librarian Greg Lucas. "Childhood access to reading materials is fundamental to success later in life, and this project aims to expand that access to all Californians in an equitable and meaningful way."

The initial eBooks in the eLibrary are paid for through American Rescue Plan Act funds and will be available through the Palace Project eBook platform and app supported by the non-profit LYRASIS and strategic partner Digital Public Library of America. The State Library has partnered with the Black Gold Cooperative Library System in administering the new eLibrary. Future funds, if available, will be provided to add new titles, based on local library requests and the needs of their communities.

Providing – and growing -- a statewide eBook collection that is accessible regardless of where one lives or the budget of their local library, ensures youth impacted by a lack of physical access to reading materials are more fully supported. Over time, California's statewide eLibrary will grow to include fiction and nonfiction titles for adults

This program is part of a broader set of projects the California State Library is implementing to aid Californians in recovery from the pandemic. Other initiatives support residents with internet connectivity and devices at home, provide tech support for seniors, and provide an array of digital workforce support platforms through libraries across the state.

Public libraries are community hubs that bring people together and close the opportunity gap by connecting people to essential services and resources. This statewide eBook collection and shared Palace reading app are another way in which libraries support early literacy, build and encourage communities of lifelong learners, increase digital equity, and support the information needs of a 21st Century society.

These projects were supported in whole or in part by the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) under the provisions of the American Rescue Plan Act, administered in California by the State Librarian. IMLS advances, supports, and empowers America's museums, libraries, and related organizations through grantmaking, research, and policy development.

About the State Library: Founded in 1850, the [California State Library](#) has an extensive collection of art, books, diaries, maps, newspapers, periodicals, photographs, and posters from throughout California's rich history. The State Library is also California state government's information hub and holds federal and state publications, is home to the Bernard E. Witkin State Law Library and the Braille and Talking Book Library, and serves as the lead state agency for library-related services throughout California.

About Black Gold Cooperative Library System: Founded in 1964, the Black Gold Cooperative Library System is one of nine cooperative library systems in California and serves member libraries throughout San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura Counties. Black Gold Cooperative was created for the purpose of sharing resources amongst its members and has successfully been doing so for 57 years.

About the Palace Project: [The Palace Project](#) is a suite of content, services, and tools for the delivery of eBooks, audiobooks, and other digital media to benefit public libraries and their patrons. Funded by a \$5 million investment from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, The Palace Project is a division of LYRASIS, working in strategic partnership with Digital Public Library of America (DPLA).