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Read Freely with Los Angeles Public Library Makes Many of the Most Challenged Books Available to Readers 13+ Nationwide

LOS ANGELES (October 6, 2023)—The Los Angeles Public Library is marking Banned Books Week with the launch of a new program that will promote the ideal of reading freely without restrictions and increase access to information and stories for people throughout the United States.

The **Read Freely with Los Angeles Public Library** initiative makes many of the most challenged books of 2022, as identified by the American Library Association’s Office for Intellectual Freedom, available to readers ages 13 and over in all 50 states. These e-books will be available throughout the nation, including the big cities and small towns where these materials are currently banned or blocked.

In 2022, a record 2,571 unique titles were targeted for censorship in the United States, most of which were by or about LGBTQIA+ persons and Black, Indigenous, and people of color. In total, there were more than double the number of book challenges made in 2022 compared to the year before, continuing a trend of challenging the freedom to read and ensuring the free and open access to information.

“Read Freely with Los Angeles Public Library is a response to the increasingly coordinated efforts to remove books addressing a wide range of topics from library shelves across the country,” said Jené Brown, Director of Emerging Technologies and Collections at the Los Angeles Public Library. “As supporters and facilitators of the free exchange of ideas and information in a democratic society, we champion the right to read freely.”

Individuals who live outside of the Library’s service area will be able to apply for a Read Freely card online at lapl.org/read-freely. Applicants will receive their card number instantly and will have immediate access to the collection.

Southern California residents who are eligible for either a Los Angeles Public Library card or a Los Angeles Public Library e-card do not need to apply for a Read Freely card as all of these materials are already available to them along with much more from our catalogs.

A recipient of the nation's highest honor for library service—the National Medal from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the Los Angeles Public Library serves the largest and most diverse urban population of any library in the nation. Its Central Library, 72 branch libraries, collection of more than eight million books, state-of-the art technology accessible at lapl.org, and diverse programs provide everyone with free and easy access to information and the opportunity for lifelong learning.

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