

# Volunteer Reader Training Playbook

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The Deal Center held a pilot volunteer reader training event as an opportunity for volunteer readers from across Georgia to experience, learn, and practice evidence-based strategies for sharing stories through reading aloud with children. At this event, participants received training from the Deal Center team in evidence-based strategies for reading with young children, background checks through the GCSU Office of Public Safety, as well as the opportunity to network with Communities in Schools site coordinators to schedule reading visits to local schools. The ultimate goal of an event of this nature is to equip participants with the knowledge and confidence to engage in meaningful reading experiences that promote language and literacy development, furthering the Deal Center's mission to advance research in language and literacy practices throughout Georgia, and ensuring every child reaches their full potential. The Deal Center offers the following steps as a guide for hosting a volunteer reader training event in your community.

## 1. IDENTIFY A LEAD ORGANIZER OR HOST ORGANIZATION

- Choose a responsible individual or organization to take charge of planning and coordinating the event
- Select a date that aligns with the availability and needs of your community

## 2. SECURE A LOCATION

- Find a suitable venue where participants can safely gather, considering accessibility, parking, and practicality of the space
- Consider providing refreshments based on the event's duration (beverages and snacks for at least 2 hours, a meal for at least 4 hours)

## 3. IDENTIFY A LOCAL CHAMPION

- Seek out a community leader or influential figure who can serve as a speaker to inspire and set the tone and purpose for the training

## 4. COORDINATE WITH LOCAL SCHOOLS

- Establish connections with local schools to understand their volunteer requirements and procedures (requirements may vary depending on school/district)
- Encourage a school coordinator to attend the training to actively schedule participants for reading visits

## 5. COORDINATE BACKGROUND CHECKS

- Communicate with local law enforcement to understand background check procedures and costs
- If possible, arrange for onsite background checks through campus public safety or other convenient services
- Consider partnering directly with a local school to ensure alignment of volunteer requirements and training components

## 6. ARRANGE FOR DEAL CENTER TEAM TO PROVIDE TRAINING

- Reach out to the Deal Center Program Team to schedule training on and modeling of evidence-based strategies for reading with children
- Allocate approximately 90 minutes for the training; no cost

## 7. DETERMINE REGISTRATION PROCESS AND COST

- Decide on the registration method (online, email, etc.) and any associated costs for participants
- Determine the minimum/maximum number of participants (consider the selected venue's capacity)

## 8. ESTABLISH AGENDA AND A/V NEEDS

- Create a detailed agenda for the event, including timing for each activity and breaks
- Identify any audiovisual equipment needed for presentations or demonstrations
- Clarify the call to action for participants, such as encouraging them to schedule reading sessions with classrooms on a specific day or event

## 9. MARKET THE EVENT

- Spread the word about the event through various channels, including social media, local civic organizations, church groups, libraries, and schools
- Create and distribute physical flyers to increase visibility and reach within the community

## 10. EXECUTE THE EVENT

- Send a reminder email containing all pertinent information for participants in the week leading up to the event (what to bring, where to park, driving directions, how to check-in, dress code, who to contact with last minute questions, etc.)
- Establish on-site facilitator(s) that will keep the event running smoothly
- Follow up with participants after the event, considering the feedback and data you want to collect

The Deal Center program team is here to support you by offering guidance and technical assistance as you prepare to host a volunteer reader event in your community. By following these steps, you can confidently plan and execute an event that equips participants with the tools to support children on the path to literacy.

## CONTACT THE DEAL CENTER

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