Sacramento, CA, May 8, 2020 - The California State Library announced today a partnership with the California Library Association to provide a new literacy tool to libraries statewide. Awarded this week, the grant will provide every public library jurisdiction a subscription to the Beanstack platform beanstack.com at no charge.

Like most businesses and government offices, COVID-19 has required public libraries to close their physical doors for an extended length of time, and the most optimistic projections including significant social distancing requirements in place for summer 2020 and beyond. In addition, schools have closed and evidence is showing the inequity of online education is leaving some students behind in reading skills. In the coming months, the “summer slide” in which students lose information that they learned in school the previous year is likely to be exacerbated by the “COVID slide.”

As library staff around the state work to develop new strategies for engaging patrons in the face of ongoing disruptions and closures, the California State Library and California Library Association have partnered to use CARES Act funding made available through the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to make it easier than ever for jurisdictions statewide to run reading programs in local jurisdictions.

The Beanstack platform makes it easy for library patrons to register, track reading, and earn incentives while libraries gain data-driven insights that help show their value in the community. Readers within your library can post and like written book reviews as well as photos or videos, called “Picture Reviews,” to help other readers discover their next book.

Information on how to sign up with Beanstack will be available next week. If you have questions, please email summeratyourlibrary@cla-net.org