



**For Immediate Release
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AS PANDEMIC RESPONSE MOVES RESOURCES OUT OF REACH OF NEW YORKERS WITHOUT INTERNET ACCESS, PRISON LIBRARY SUPPORT NETWORK (PLSN) PARTNERS WITH NEW YORK CITY LIBRARIANS TO PROVIDE NEW YORKERS IN SHELTERS, TRANSITIONAL HOUSING, AND JAILS WITH VITAL ACCESS TO LIBRARY COLLECTIONS THAT REFLECT THEIR NEEDS AND INTERESTS

NEW YORK, NY, November 23, 2020 — Volunteer-run information-based collective Prison Library Support Network, in partnership with New York City library workers, has launched “Book Collections for New Yorkers in Jails and Shelters,” a project that aims to sustain and protect access to information resources for our neighbors quickly and effectively.

This project is a product of unprecedented times. The effects of Covid-19 have upended the way libraries traditionally serve people, requiring creative solutions. Since March, an abundance of online public library programs have been established to ensure remote access to library collections. At the same time, budgets are being cut and there is no indication that the city or public library systems will commit adequate resources to serve what officials consider “special populations.”

We live in an age of remote school, remote work, remote recovery meetings and remote entertainment. Meanwhile, internet access remains far from universal, and thousands of New York City residents have no access to resources in a time of crisis.

To help confront this specter of widening inequality, a team of library workers from all three boroughs and activists in New York are working to build outreach collections that secure equitable access to books for everyone, including those in shelters, transitional housing, and who are currently or formerly incarcerated.

Donations will allow NYC library workers to acquire high-quality book collections, shelving, and other supplies necessary to build and maintain book collections in New York City shelters and jails. Together we will ensure that all New Yorkers have a way to read the books that they *want* to read, regardless of their housing status or interaction with the criminal justice system.

How to participate:

Donate directly to the fundraiser, November 23–December 6, 2020:

<https://ioby.org/project/book-collections-new-yorkers-jails-and-shelters>

Other ways to help:

1. The generous support of Greenlight Bookstore has made it easy to donate a specific book directly, through the online wishlist:

<https://www.greenlightbookstore.com/wishlist/1104>

If you are able to provide support at this level, you can order a book that has been hand-picked by New York City library workers who provide library service to correctional facilities and shelters that house people who have recently been released.

2. Spread the word about our fundraiser by inviting your friends, comrades, and family to share this campaign on social media.
3. Start a match challenge with your friends and family by asking people to match a donation of any size and passing along the fundraising link.

For additional quotes, figures, and resources for action, please contact Mia Bruner at plsn_nyc@protonmail.com.

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About Prison Library Support Network (PLSN)

The Prison Library Support Network is an information-based collective founded in 2016 to support incarcerated people by organizing networks for sharing resources and building community around prison abolition in libraries, archives, and other knowledge-based institutions. Past and ongoing projects we have organized include volunteer reference-letter writing to incarcerated New Yorkers, a prison abolition book club at the New York Metropolitan Library Council, the rejuvenation of a Brooklyn Public Library space used by families for BPL's TeleStory program, and book donation drives with NYPL's Correctional Services division. In the spring of 2020, PLSN received the Special Library Association's New York Chapter Organizational Spotlight Award.

<https://plsn-nyc.tumblr.com/about>