

# It's time for the first ever Summer Reading Button Exchange!

## What the heck is a button exchange?

The Guild of Library Makers is inviting everyone to make buttons and send them in to be mixed into mystery boxes and sent back out to everyone who participates. Show off your creativity and get a cool box of buttons from strange and exotic corners of the state!

**All you have to do is fill out the entry form, make 50 buttons with a summer reading theme, and send them to us by April 24th, 2026.** We'll mix all the buttons, sort them into mystery boxes, and then send those boxes back out to everyone who participates!

What you do with the buttons is up to you; display them, wear them, give them to patrons, trade them with other participants...whatever feels right, just make sure you show off the buttons you get and think about sending a thank you or a shout out to everyone that sent you one!

The full guidelines are below and there's an FAQ at the end of this packet. If you have any questions, reach out to GoLM at [guildoflibrarymakers.com](http://guildoflibrarymakers.com) and we'll get back to you as quickly as possible.

There's a big community out there who loves our libraries, loves our communities, and loves summer reading. Join us!

Thank you, and happy making!

## 2026 Summer Reading Button Exchange Guidelines

To participate, here's what you'll need to do:

1. **Fill out the entry form here:**

<https://tinyurl.com/GoLM-2026-SRBE-Entry-Form>

2. **Make 50 buttons**

This is the fun part, so be creative! Your buttons can be made on a button press, colored by first graders, 3D printed, crocheted, lovingly hand carved from imported marble...whatever! Use whatever you like for a fastener (pin back, magnet clasp, etc), but please make sure any pointy bits aren't going to poke anyone when you ship the buttons and please try to keep the total weight down.

Your buttons should:

- a. Have a summer reading theme
- b. Include your organization's name or logo so people will know where it came from and who to thank!

We've had several libraries reach out to say they'd be happy to help anyone who doesn't have a button maker or doesn't know what to do! Reach out to the Guild of Library Makers at [guildoflibrarymakers.com](http://guildoflibrarymakers.com) or [guildoflibrarymakers@gmail.com](mailto:guildoflibrarymakers@gmail.com) and we'll do what we can to support you directly or connect you with a local resource who can help.

3. **Box up the buttons**

- a. Put all your buttons in a box...*please* do not ship them in an envelope.
- b. Write "2026 SUMMER READING BUTTON EXCHANGE" on the outside of the box or print a label and stick it on there.
- c. Put a a piece of paper with the following information inside the box with the buttons:
  - i. The name of your library, institution, or organization
  - ii. Your RIDES code if you have one  
You can find your RIDES code here:  
[members.mcls.org/w/melcatforms/melcontacts-rides.cfm](http://members.mcls.org/w/melcatforms/melcontacts-rides.cfm)
  - iii. Your physical mailing address
  - iv. A good point of contact (phone number and email)

4. **Ship us the buttons.**

**BUTTONS MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN APRIL 24th, 2026!**

You can send us the buttons one of two ways:

- a. Send them through the RIDES network to:  
Dearborn Heights Library, John F. Kennedy, Jr. Branch  
ATTN: Carolyn Smith  
RIDES code: 500-ZV370\_28

b. Mail them to or drop them off at the Wilder branch of the Detroit Public Library:  
Wilder Branch Library  
ATTN: Sarah Mills / Justine Cucchi-Dietlin  
7140 E 7 Mile Rd  
Detroit, MI 48234

5. **That's it!**

Sit back, relax, and wait for your mystery box to arrive! We'll start processing the submissions at the end of April and will be shipping everything out as quickly as possible so that everyone receives their boxes in time for the start of summer reading!

6. **Actually...**

Well...there is *one* more thing you can do.

TAKE PICTURES! Show off your design, give a shout out to your staff and volunteers, give us a virtual tour of your space, challenge other groups to out-sparkle your fabulous creations...whatever! This is a great opportunity to connect with each other and promote libraries and reading, so let's take advantage of it!

Post them on your websites and social media pages and tag them with #SummerReadingButtonExchange. Email them to us at [guildoflibrarymakers@gmail.com](mailto:guildoflibrarymakers@gmail.com) or join our Discord at <https://discord.gg/9vRYyXKPrf> and share them with the GoLM community!

Please join the Guild of Library Makers in giving a *huge* thank you to the John F. Kennedy, Jr. branch of the Dearborn Heights Library and the Wilder branch of the Detroit Public Library for helping us make this happen, and thank you to the Deliveries team at The Library Network for being so great to work with!

**Questions? Suggestions? Want to pitch in? Connect with GoLM!**

Website: [guildoflibrarymakers.com](http://guildoflibrarymakers.com)  
Email: [guildoflibrarymakers@gmail.com](mailto:guildoflibrarymakers@gmail.com)  
Discord: <https://discord.gg/9vRYyXKPrf>

**Happy making, everyone!**

## 2026 SRBE FAQ

### **Is there a live link to the guidelines?**

Yes! You can find them here: <https://tinyurl.com/GoLM-2026-SRBE-Guidelines>

### **My library system has multiple branches. Can each branch make 50 buttons, or is it just 50 buttons for the whole system?**

If your organization has multiple locations or teams who would like to participate (multiple branches of the same library system, different departments in a museum, or different classes at a school, for example), that's great! Please enter each location/team separately so that we can keep track of all the participants.

### **When are buttons due?**

The deadline for submissions is **April 24th, 2026**.

The original deadline was March 31st, but after conferring with several participants and our partner libraries, we extended it out to give more time for people to get their buttons made and submitted.

Our original goal was to get mystery boxes shipped back to participants by May 1 and we're being very conservative on how long we think it will take to sort, package, and ship. We believe with the April 24th deadline, everyone will have their mystery boxes in hand by the third or fourth week of May at the latest.

We apologize for any confusion, but we think this will give more people the opportunity to participate.

### **Can organizations that aren't libraries participate?**

Absolutely! The program is open to all libraries, schools, library co-ops, museums, and other organizations partnered with their local library who want to promote and support summer reading.

### **I'm not a library and/or I don't have access to RIDES. Can I send and receive my buttons through a RIDES library?**

Maybe! The best thing to do is to reach out to your local library directly and talk to them about it. If they have questions or if you still need help, please contact us at [guildoflibrarymakers@gmail.com](mailto:guildoflibrarymakers@gmail.com) and we'll do what we can to get everything sorted.

### **We want to make buttons, but we don't have a button maker. Can we still participate?**

Yes! Please reach out to us at [guildoflibrarymakers@gmail.com](mailto:guildoflibrarymakers@gmail.com) and we'll try to connect you with a local library, makerspace, or other resource that can help you.

**Why do we have to fill out the entry form?**

The entry form allows us to estimate our costs for shipping everything back out and helps us keep track of participants. We want to make sure to thank everyone who sends in buttons and to keep an eye out for entries that haven't arrived as the deadline gets closer.

We can't help you find a lost package if we don't know you're planning to send something to us!

**What *can't* we submit on our button designs?**

Please remember that this is a free, nonpartisan, community event. Any submissions that our volunteers feel cross over into political statements, campaigning, commercial advertisements, or that just isn't kid friendly cannot be accepted. If that happens, we'll reach out to you to let you know and we'll try to work with you to get a new button submitted before the deadline if there's time.

**I have a community partner who wants to make buttons. Can I send and/or receive their buttons for them?**

Yes! Group as many different submissions as you like into a single shipment, but please box or bag them all separately with separate info sheets so we can keep track of them.

You can also help us save on shipping costs back to you! If you participate in RIDES and you invite a group to join the exchange that doesn't, please have them use your library as the receiving location for their mystery box!

If your organization is entering multiple teams who share a mailing address (like different classes at the same school), we'll try to group your mystery boxes together when we send them out.

**What the heck is RIDES?**

The Regional Interlibrary DELivery Service, a courier service from the Midwest Collaborative for Library Services. RIDES is a fantastic resource that allows participating libraries to easily share our materials, lend each other small items, and donate things to one another to help keep our costs lower and to keep landfills just a little bit emptier.

RIDES: <https://www.mcls.org/rides>

MCLS: [www.mcls.org](http://www.mcls.org)

If your local library participates in RIDES you can always ask them (politely!) if they will send your buttons for you or you can reach out to GoLM at [guildoflibrarymakers@gmail.com](mailto:guildoflibrarymakers@gmail.com) and we'll try to help you. You can also mail the buttons or drop them off in person; whatever is easiest!

**Can I submit more than 50 buttons?**

We appreciate the enthusiasm, but for this first year we're limiting everyone to 50 to keep the barrier for entry low.

**If I'd known about this sooner, I would've made a program or event out of making the buttons.**

That's a great idea and we're right there with you! We've already gotten a great response for this first event, and this is one of the changes we'll definitely be making for next year.

**Can my library host this next year?**

We'll be talking to this year's partner libraries in Dearborn Heights and Detroit once we've got all the mystery boxes shipped back out so we can evaluate lessons learned and start planning for next year. This is one of the things we'll be discussing, but we can't say much more about it yet.

Email us at [guildoflibrarymakers@gmail.com](mailto:guildoflibrarymakers@gmail.com) if you'd like to talk about partnering with us on an event in the future!

FAQ updated 05 Mar 2026