



Low-Cost, High-Impact Library Programming Ideas

From TLA webinar “Dollars and Cents, Making the Most of Programming on a Dime,” presented by Dr. Karina Quilantan-Garza and Linda A. Martinez

01

Upcycled Book Crafts

- **Old Book Crafts:** Turn weeded pages into paper flowers and cards.
- **Pressed Flower Bookmarks:** Flatten wilted blooms, seal in laminating pouches, and tie with ribbon.
- **Bubble Art Bookmarks:** Blow paint/soap bubbles onto cardstock; pair with matching cover colors.
- **Blackout Poetry:** Discarded book pages to blackout words in a poem.
- **Seeded Paper Bookmarks:** Blend old pages with wildflower seeds for plantable, eco-friendly gifts.

02

Low-Cost Passive Stations

- **Coffee Filter Garlands:** Use coffee filters for instant snowflake garlands.
- **Haunted Cardboard Houses:** Swap pricey pumpkins for upcycled cardboard haunted house contest.
- **DIY Chopstick Wands:** Use donated restaurant chopsticks, hot glue patterns, paint, and beads.
- **Ghostie Bookmarks:** Set out scissors, markers, and discarded pages for a quick lunch-hour station.

03

Partnerships & Funding

- **The 3-Month Advance Rule:** Request reader gift cards/incentives three months ahead with official letter.
- **Pet Food Fine Forgiveness:** Clear student fines in exchange for pet food donated to local shelters.
- **DonorsChoose:** Keep grant requests under \$250 for much faster funding success.
- **Community Life-Skills:** Invite local pros (officers, yoga instructors, e-sports groups) to present career and life sessions

04

Decor & Micro-Grants

- **Decor:** Fold pages of outdated encyclopedias into geometric wall features. Use old books to create trees and pumpkins.
- **Test-Tube Plant Wall:** Combine pallets and surplus science test tubes for water-propagated plants.
- **Grants:** Apply for Pets in the Classroom or an EcoRise grant
- **Resource Kits:** Reach out to MagiKids for Magic: The Gathering® card kits, and Texas Wildlife Association Discovery Trunks.

Watch the webinar in the TLA Learning Hub for more ideas and tips at txla.org/professional-development/