Official Organization Statement

We Need Diverse Books is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that runs twelve exciting initiatives united under one goal—to combat systemic racism and oppression by creating a world where everyone can find themselves on the pages of a book. Established in 2014, WNDB strives to support and amplify diverse literature by mentoring marginalized creators, providing resources to diverse publishing professionals, and donating diverse books to schools and libraries nationwide. Learn more at diversebooks.org.

CURRENT DIVERSITY STATS:

- Research shows that Black and Latinx readers are more avid, engaged readers that the industry needs to do a better job of reaching.

- CCBC statistics on Multicultural Children’s Books and a closer look and observations about these trends. CCBC Infographic for 2018. CCBC statistics for 2019 on percentages of books depicting main characters from diverse backgrounds: 11.9% Black/African, 1% Native/First Nations, 5.3% Latinx, 8.7% Asian/Asian American, .05% Pacific Islander, 41.8% white, 29.2% animal/other.

  2019 stats: 3.4% books with disabled main characters, 3.1% LGBTQIAP+. 2019 percentage of books written and/or illustrated by authors and/or artists of the same race: 68.2% Native/First Nations, 46.4% Black/African, 80% Pacific Islanders, 95.7% Latinx, and 100% Asian/Asian American.

- In 2018, only 11% of books were written by people of color and 89% were written by white writers, according to research from the New York Times.

- Lee & Low’s 2019 Diversity in Publishing Baseline Study. Stats: 76% white, 7% Asian/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander/South Asian/South East Indian, 6% Latinx/Mexican, 5% Black/Afro American/Afro Caribbean, 3% biracial/multiracial, <1% Middle Eastern, <1% American Indian/Alaskan Native/First Nations/Native American. 74% cis women, 23% cis men, 1% genderfluid/genderqueer/nonbinary, <1% each for trans men, intersex people, and trans women. 81% straight, 10% bisexual/pansexual, 4% gay, 2% lesbian, and 1% asexual. 89% nondisabled.

• Statistics on New York Times bestselling books by race. Stats: Bestseller titles by author race 69% white, 9% East Asian, 2% Latinx, 2% South Asian, 9% Black, 3% unspecified, 2% Afro-Latinx, 2% Middle Eastern, 2% Southeast Asian.

• The Internship Grant Program has given 83 Internship Grants to interns at Big 5 and independent publishing houses and literary agencies of all sizes from across the country. Of the 58 grantees who have graduated college, 54 are now employed in the publishing industry, with many of our grantees busy making acquisitions. WNDB has also introduced internships in adult book publishing, beginning in 2020.

• WNDB in the Classroom has donated over 73,000 children’s books, including Walter-award winning titles, to public schools in 48 states across the country. These titles were sent to schools with no libraries, and children who often have no books at home.

• The Black Creatives Fund is completing its first cycle with the launch of its six-month mentorship program, and has been able to support, at present, over 25 Black creatives through the Revisions Workshop and Marketing Symposium.

• LitUp, in partnership with Hello Sunshine and Madcap Retreats, launched in 2021 and has welcomed its inaugural cohort of six emerging writers. LitUp is a fellowship for unpublished, underrepresented women storytellers. The chosen fellows will receive mentorship from the best in the business, an all-expenses-paid retreat, and marketing support from Reese’s Book Club.

• The Native Fund has launched a Native Children’s and YA Writing Intensive. Alumnx of this workshop have received more than 7 book deals and many are now contracted with literary agents. The Native Fund has also donated books by Native, Indigenous, and First Nations authors to several United States public schools.

• The Penguin Random House and We Need Diverse Books Creative Writing Awards has provided $150,000 in scholarship awards to public high school seniors.
• **Our Mentorship program** has mentored over **85 emerging authors and illustrators** as of its 2022 cycle, among them Lisa Brathwaite, Diana Ma, Dane Liu, and A. M. Dassu. Recently, Angeline Boulley, a 2019 mentee who worked with author Francisco X. Stork, sold her debut **YA novel after a 12-bidder auction**. Several past mentees have given back by returning as mentors, including Valerie Bolling and Olivia Aserr.

• **Inaugurated in 2016, the annual Walter Dean Myers Awards have celebrated 30 titles of children’s and young adult authors**, among them Jason Reynolds, Elizabeth Acevedo, Ibi Zoboi, Yusef Salaam, Mariko Tamaki, Jewell Parker Rhodes, John Lewis, Nate Powell, Margarita Engle, Kacen Callender, Akwaeke Emezi, and Nicola Yoon.

• **The Walter Dean Myers Grant** has honored and provided financial support to **34 aspiring creators from marginalized communities**, and past honorees include Angie Thomas, Yamile Saied Mendez, Arriel Vinson, and Jennifer De Leon.