



Little Free Library

Basecamp Guide

For LFL Stewards & Charter Owners

Your Little Free Library is already a community treasure. Joining The Open Sidewalk Project adds the ability to track book journeys beyond your neighborhood—turning local circulation into global connection.



WHY JOIN AS A SIDEWALK STATION?

Your Little Free Library is perfect for The Open Sidewalk Project because you're already facilitating book sharing. By becoming a Sidewalk Station, you add a powerful new dimension:

Traditional LFL Model:

Book → Your library → Local neighbor → Stays local

LFL + Sidewalk Station Model:

Book → Your library → Reader logs reflection → Sets free elsewhere → Travels globally → You see the journey

Benefits for Your LFL:

- **Enhanced visibility** — Listed on OSP's Sidewalk Station map
- **Expanded stories** — See where books from your library travel
- **Community engagement** — New conversation starter for neighbors
- **Trackable impact** — Measure your library's reach beyond your block
- **Zero cost** — All materials provided free by OSP
- **No obligation** — Visitors can still use your LFL traditionally



KEY PRINCIPLE: Your LFL remains a traditional "take a book, leave a book" library. The Open Sidewalk Project is an **OPTIONAL** enhancement for visitors who want to track their book's journey.



HYBRID STATION SETUP

How the Hybrid Model Works

Your Little Free Library will function as both:

- 1. Traditional Little Free Library** — Take a book, leave a book, local circulation
- 2. Open Sidewalk Station** — Books can be registered and tracked on longer journeys

What This Means:

- Some visitors will use your LFL the traditional way (take, read, return/exchange locally)
- Other visitors will take a book, register it with OSP, read it, then set it free elsewhere
- Some books in your library will be OSP-registered (marked with BookCrossing ID labels)
- Some books will be unregistered traditional donations
- **Both are perfectly fine!**

The Three Types of Books in Your LFL:

1. OSP-Registered Books (labeled with BCID)

These books can be tracked on their journey. Visitors are invited to log a Sidewalk Reflection and set the book free elsewhere when done.

2. Traditional LFL Books (no BCID label)

Regular books people can take, read, and return or exchange locally.

3. Hybrid Books (your choice)

Books you've personally registered with OSP but are happy to have circulate locally first.

SIGNAGE & MATERIALS

What You'll Need (All Provided by OSP):

1. **Exterior Sidewalk Station Sign** — Weatherproof sign to affix to or near your LFL
2. **Interior Instruction Card** — Laminated card placed inside the library
3. **Window Cling with QR Code** — Optional, for glass-door LFLs
4. **"Take, Read, Set Free" Stickers** — Small stickers for OSP books

Installation Guide:

Step 1: Exterior Sign Placement

Sidewalk Station Sign (8.5" x 11" weatherproof)

Mount on or near your LFL where passersby can see it. Options:

- Attach to the side or roof of the LFL box
- Mount on post/pole next to your LFL
- Place in a protective sleeve inside a window of the LFL door

Materials needed: Outdoor adhesive strips, small screws, or zip ties

Step 2: Interior Instruction Card

Laminated Card (5" x 7")

Place inside the library where visitors will see it when they open the door.

Secure with:

- Small adhesive velcro dots (easy to reposition)
- Pushpin or small nail
- Lean against books on shelf

Purpose: Explains how to use OSP-registered books they find inside

Sidewalk Station Sign (Exterior)



LITTLE FREE LIBRARY + THE OPEN SIDEWALK PROJECT

Take a book. Read it.

Then choose:

- ✓ Return it here for local sharing
- ✓ Set it free elsewhere and track its journey

Books with BookCrossing ID labels can be tracked at:

opensidewalkproject.org



Interior Instruction Card



BOOKS IN THIS LIBRARY

Some books here have a BookCrossing ID label inside.

These books are part of The Open Sidewalk Project—a movement tracking book journeys around the world.

IF YOU FIND A LABELED BOOK:

1. Take it! Read it!
2. Go to opensidewalkproject.org
3. Log a Sidewalk Reflection about your experience

4. Set it free for the next reader (anywhere!)
5. Track where it goes next

IF YOU FIND AN UNLABELED BOOK:

Enjoy! Return it here or pass it forward—your choice.

All books welcome. All choices respected.



SEEDING YOUR LFL WITH REGISTERED BOOKS

To get started as a Sidewalk Station, you'll want to add some OSP-registered books to your library. Here's how:

Option 1: Register Books from Your Personal Collection

1. Choose 5-10 books from your own shelves you're ready to release
2. Go to opensidewalkproject.org/register and request BookCrossing IDs
3. Print or write labels with the BCID inside each book
4. Write a brief Sidewalk Reflection for each (why you're setting it free)
5. Log your release at opensidewalkproject.org/release
6. Place the books in your LFL
7. Take a photo and upload it as your "release location"

Option 2: Partner with Local OSP Participants

Ask local Open Sidewalk Project participants to release their registered books through your LFL. This:

- Builds community connections
- Brings fresh books to your library
- Increases foot traffic
- Creates a hub for book lovers

Option 3: Gradual Seeding

Start with just 3-5 registered books and add more as you see how visitors respond. This low-pressure approach lets you test the hybrid model before committing to bulk registration.

 **TIP:** Add a small "OSP" sticker to the spine of registered books so visitors can easily identify which books can be tracked.



MANAGING BOTH MODELS

Balancing "Take & Return" with "Take & Set Free"

The beauty of the hybrid model is flexibility. Here's how to communicate both options:

The Message to Visitors:

"This Little Free Library welcomes all book lovers. You can:

- Take a book and return it here when done
- Take a book and exchange it for another
- Take an OSP-registered book and set it free elsewhere

Your choice. Your journey. All paths are welcome."

Common Questions from LFL Stewards:

Q: What if people take OSP books and never log them?

A: That's okay! Not everyone will participate in tracking. The book still fulfilled its purpose—it found a reader. Some journeys are tracked, some aren't. Both matter.

Q: What if people return OSP-registered books to my LFL?

A: Perfect! The book continues its journey. Another visitor can take it and log the next leg. Books can circle through your LFL multiple times.

Q: Should I require visitors to participate in OSP?

A: **No.** Keep it optional. The invitation is enough. Forced participation defeats the spirit of both LFL and OSP.

Q: Can I remove the OSP signage if I change my mind?

A: Absolutely. There's no commitment. Try it, see how it feels, adjust as needed.

VISITOR COMMUNICATION

Simple Instructions for People Who Find Registered Books

Keep it simple and inviting. Avoid overwhelming visitors with too many steps. Here's the core message:

Found a book with a BookCrossing ID label?

1. Take it! It's free.
2. Read it at your own pace.
3. Visit opensidewalkproject.org and log a quick reflection.
4. Set it free for the next reader—anywhere you like!
5. Check back to see where it travels next.

Optional, but meaningful. Join the journey.

How to Encourage (Not Require) Sidewalk Reflections

The key is invitation, not obligation. Use language like:

-  "You're invited to log a reflection..."
-  "If you'd like to be part of this book's journey..."
-  "Optional: Share your thoughts at..."
-  "You must register..."
-  "Don't forget to log..."
-  "Required: Visit the website..."



TONE TIP: Frame participation as a gift to future readers, not a rule.
"Your reflection helps the next reader understand why this book matters."



SOCIAL MEDIA & NEWSLETTER LANGUAGE

Announcing Your Partnership (Social Media Post)

 Big news! Our Little Free Library is now an official Sidewalk Station for The Open Sidewalk Project!

What does that mean? Some books in our library can now be tracked on journeys around the world. Take a book, read it, log a reflection, and set it free—then watch where it travels next.

You can still use the library the traditional way (take a book, return a book). OR you can take an OSP-registered book and send it on a global adventure.

Stop by and check out the new signage! Let's see how far our neighborhood books can travel. 

#OpenSidewalkProject #LittleFreeLibrary #BooksInMotion"

Newsletter Announcement

Subject: Our Little Free Library Joins The Open Sidewalk Project

We're excited to announce that [Your LFL Name/Location] is now a Sidewalk Station!

The Open Sidewalk Project is a movement that tracks book journeys from reader to reader. When you take a book with a BookCrossing ID label from our library, you can log where you found it, share your thoughts, and then set it free for the next reader—anywhere in the world.

You'll be able to track where that book goes next. It's like a message in a bottle, but with books.

Our library will still function the same way it always has—take a book, leave a book, enjoy freely. The Open Sidewalk Project is simply an optional enhancement for those who want to be part of a book's larger journey.

Stop by soon! We've seeded the library with several registered books ready to begin their travels.

Happy reading,

[Your Name]

LFL Steward

Ongoing Social Media Updates

Share milestones and stories to keep your community engaged:

Journey Update Post:

"Update: A book released from our LFL in June just logged its 5th reader—in Seattle! It started here in [Your City] and has traveled 2,000 miles. This is the magic of The Open Sidewalk Project. 

Invitation Post:

"Have a book you loved but are ready to release? Add a BookCrossing ID label (free from opensidewalkproject.org) and place it in our Little Free Library. Let's send some great stories into the world!"

Milestone Post:

" Our Sidewalk Station Update: 47 books released, 12 countries reached, 200+ reflections logged. Who knew our little library could have global reach? Keep those books moving! 



TROUBLESHOOTING & TIPS

Common Challenges & Solutions

Challenge: Not enough OSP-registered books in the library

Solution: Start with just 5-10. Post on local Facebook groups asking OSP participants to use your LFL as a release point.

Challenge: Visitors confused about which books are OSP vs. traditional

Solution: Add small spine stickers labeled "OSP" on registered books. Update interior card to clarify.

Challenge: Weather damaging exterior sign

Solution: Laminate the sign or place it in a clear weatherproof sleeve. Replace annually if needed (OSP provides free reprints).

Challenge: No one is logging reflections

Solution: Be patient! It takes time for visitors to discover the program. Share on social media, mention it to neighbors, give it 3-6 months.

Challenge: Too many OSP books leaving, not enough returning

Solution: This is actually success! The books are traveling. Replenish with more registered books or traditional donations.



REMEMBER: Not every visitor will participate in OSP, and that's okay. Your LFL serves both local circulation and global journeys. Both are valuable.



MEASURING YOUR IMPACT

As a Sidewalk Station, you can track your Little Free Library's reach:

Metrics to Celebrate:

- **Books released through your LFL** — How many OSP books started their journey here?
- **Cities/countries reached** — How far have your books traveled?
- **Total readers touched** — How many people logged reflections?
- **Most-traveled book** — Which book from your LFL went farthest?
- **Longest journey time** — Which book is still traveling years later?

Check opensidewalkproject.org to see your Sidewalk Station profile and stats.



YOU'RE READY!

You now have everything you need to transform your Little Free Library into a Sidewalk Station:

- Understanding of the hybrid model**
- Signage and installation instructions
- Language for communicating with visitors
- Social media and newsletter templates
- Troubleshooting strategies
- Ways to measure your impact

Your Little Free Library is about to become a launchpad for global book journeys. Welcome to The Open Sidewalk Project!

Next Steps:

1. Order your free Sidewalk Station materials at opensidewalkproject.org/lfl
2. Register 5-10 books to seed your library
3. Install signage
4. Announce your partnership on social media
5. Watch the journeys begin!

QUESTIONS OR SUPPORT?

We're here to help Little Free Library stewards succeed!

Email: team@opensidewalkproject.org

LFL Steward Community: Join our private Facebook group for tips, troubleshooting, and celebration

Whether you need replacement signage, have questions about hybrid management, or just want to share a great book journey story—reach out anytime.

Open Sidewalk Project
Making books travel farther
opensidewalkproject.org/lfl

Connect with other LFL Sidewalk Stations:

#OpenSidewalkProject #SidewalkReflections #LittleFreeLibrary
#BooksInMotion

This guide is part of Basecamp resources at opensidewalkproject.org/basecamp

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