American Booksellers Association

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Harrison, NY — November 13, 2026

Indies First to have nearly 1,000 Indie Bookstores Participating Nationwide

The 14th annual event, coinciding with Small Business Saturday on November 28, kicks off holiday shopping, spanning independent bookstores in every US state and territory.

On Indies First — a day dedicated to supporting the local businesses that help create jobs, boost the economy, and preserve neighborhoods — independent bookstores host activities and events to kick off the holiday shopping season. Indies First is a collaborative event among authors, publishers, retailers, and readers to celebrate independent bookstores and local communities.

New this year, the Indies First Map serves as the ultimate guide to it all, spotlighting hundreds of events and experiences happening in communities nationwide on November 28. Whether readers are on the hunt for the perfect gift or planning a full day (or weekend) of bookstore hopping, the map is the go-to resource for making the most of Indies First and kicking off the holidays.

Indies First is the big day for small businesses around the country. A time for shoppers to join readers nationwide in celebrating indie bookstores, the heart of our communities. “From bestselling titles to hidden gems, there’s no better way to shop small, give big, and spread bookish joy for the holidays,” says Courtney Wallace, ABA’s Senior Marketing Manager. “Indies First is a great reminder that locally-owned businesses generate substantially more economic benefit to the local economy than chain or online businesses.”

Indies First was created in 2013; other authors and celebrities who have spearheaded the campaign include Roxane Gay, Jason Reynolds, Dan Rather, Kate DiCamillo, Cheryl Strayed, and Lena Dunham. During the official Ambassador program, ambassadors included Celeste Ng (2022), Amanda Gorman (2023), Trevor Noah (2024), and LeVar Burton (2025).

Hanif Abdurraqib, poet, essayist, and cultural critic from Columbus, Ohio, is this year's Indie Bookstore Ambassador. He is a recipient of the MacArthur Foundation "Genius Grant" and the author of *There's Always This Year,* a *New York Times* bestseller and winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award; *A Little Devil in America,* winner of the Carnegie Medal and a National Book Award finalist; *The Crown Ain't Worth Much*; *They Can't Kill Us Until They Kill Us; Go Ahead in the Rain*; and *A Fortune for Your Disaster*, winner of the Lenore Marshall Poetry Prize. He is a graduate of Beechcroft High School.

On the lead up to Indies First, Abdurraqib shared, "The indie bookstore exists for me as a kind of beacon and guide, a community guide, and a guide for what the people in the community love, and what the people in the community need, and what the people in the community desire."

ABA has also partnered with the American Independent Business Alliance (AMIBA) for the Shop Indie Local Holiday Campaign that extends Indies First through the whole holiday weekend following Thanksgiving.

Alongside the campaign, Libro.fm is offering their annual Shop Small Sale on hundreds of audiobooks, including bestsellers and bookseller picks and two free audiobooks with a new membership.

Inquiries about Indies First can be directed to indiesfirst@bookweb.org.

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About the American Booksellers Association (www.BookWeb.org)

American Booksellers Association is a national trade association that supports and advocates for the success of independent bookstores. We provide members with education, networking opportunities, advocacy, resources, and technology. In turn our members support local schools through book fairs, donations and author visits; promote literacy; provide inclusive community centers; connect readers and books; add character to neighborhoods; champion and center diverse and new voices; and contribute to the local economy. We feel honored to support over 3,200 independent bookstores in their work.