

Online bookseller 'Better World Books' to set up drop boxes in five Canadian provinces

Throughout the Summer of 2021, 'Better World Books' drop boxes will begin to appear in **five** Canadian provinces. These provinces will include:

- Ontario
- Alberta
- Quebec
- British Columbia
- Manitoba

Previously, drop boxes were only available in the United States and the United Kingdom (known as *book banks* in the latter). International donors' only option is to send books to the organization's address; however, expensive shipping costs deter them from doing so. Due to lockdown restrictions because of the coronavirus pandemic, many bookworms have turned to online bookshopping as an alternative. Better World Books specifically caught the attention of those aiming to save on shipping costs, since the store offers free international shipping on all of its products. As the store's popularity grew, so did its sales. Since the beginning of the year 2020, it's sales of increased by 16%, and 90% of their customers give their service a 4 or 5-star rating. Their increasing success is allowing them to expand to other countries -- starting with Canada.

This was suggested by over 200,000 supporters, who all signed a Change.org petition to spread literacy. This petition was started by a 13-year-old boy from Ontario named Matthew R. Barnett. "I'm sure Better World Books is overwhelmed with customers nowadays," Barnett told The Early Bird Post, "but I'm also sure that hundreds of thousands of Canadians have a bunch of old books they never read. Americans have tons of Better World Books drop boxes in several states, but wouldn't it be better if we *Canadians* could contribute alongside others to spreading literacy? Think of all the donations we could gather!" Barnett spread the word across social media, where someone suggested starting a petition. "Yeah, I started a petition. Keep in mind though that the intention was **not** to have drop boxes **only** in Canada, but in other countries, too," Barnett said. However, due to the small size of the organization, it was only possible to expand to one country.

Who are Better World Books?

Founded in 2002 by American university students, Better World Books is an American online bookseller that sells both used and new books. It is based in Mishawaka and mostly relies on donations. Whenever a customer purchases a book, a different book is purchased on behalf of a person in need. It offers free international shipping on all of its products. Although affiliated with numerous funds, charitable organizations, and companies, it mainly works alongside 'Books for Africa.'

What are drop boxes?

Since Better World Books mainly relies on book donations, they have specialized book drop boxes (a.k.a. book banks in the UK) where book donors can place their unwanted or donated books. Book drop boxes are regularly emptied by the employees at Better World Books, who then organize them and post them on their site for sale. This service was only available in the US and UK, but it is now expanding to Canada. These drop boxes can be found anywhere, such as in parks, parking lots, or even behind buildings. However, because of the organization's relatively small workforce, such drop boxes are not available in abundance nor outside the aforementioned locations.

What does this mean for other countries?

Although Better World Books drop boxes are only reaching Canada, this still gives other countries hope that said boxes would reach them. If the project works well in Canada, this means that Better World Books could eventually expand to neighboring continents, where they could reach other countries and regions (such as the Middle East). The distribution of the drop boxes should be completed by July of 2021, and a new headquarters and warehouse has already been built in Ontario. In the meantime, citizens of other countries would have to ship their books to America's warehouse, or perhaps they could find somewhere else to donate their books.