

## Organization Description

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Describe your organization's history, programming, and achievements.

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Fresno County Public Library serves over 35 diverse communities with branches that host over 5,000 public programs annually. Programs include early literacy story times, after-school arts programs for school-age children and teens, and adult programs on a wide range of subjects. FCPL's mission is to transform lives and strengthen community by providing opportunities to connect, grow, and be inspired. Our vision statement is 'A place for anyone. Something for everyone.' This is the lens through which FCPL designs library programs from large-scale summer reading programs to one-on-one computer help.

Some notable programs offered by FCPL are:

- The Veterans Resource Center, a partnership with the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet): FCPL helps veterans and their families find the community resources they need on a variety of fronts. The Veterans Resource Center is located at two libraries: the Central Library and the Betty Rodriguez Regional Library.

FCPL Summer Challenge: Every summer FCPL's countywide reading challenge prevents "summer slide" (the loss of learned literacy skills). The challenge engages children and teens in reading and other educational activities.

- Summer Lunch at the library: FCPL partners with the California Summer Meal Coalition, the California Library Association, the California State Library, the California Office of Education, and Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission to provide lunch to children and teens at seven branches across the county.

- With Out Walls (WOW); FCPL's WOW program takes the library out into the communities we serve. It provides pop up libraries at community events throughout Fresno County. Finally, FCPL offers many other programs for all age groups designed to support and connect all members of the community.

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Describe your organization's experience with presenting community-wide programming that demonstrates an ability to conduct a successful NEA Big Read.

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Fresno County Public Library continually presents successful large-scale, collaborative programming with community partners. FCPL has implemented nine National Endowment for the Arts Big Read programs and two California Reads projects. These programs have enriched the Library's relationships with existing community partners and attracted new ones, contributing to cultural awareness and a stronger community.

FCPL often embarks on large-scale grant projects. One example is The California Humanities: Community Stories Grant titled "Follow the Flume: Stories of the Lumber Trade That Shaped California's Central Valley." The Digibus, a mobile computer lab largely funded by a grant from LSTA, travels to the County's rural communities to provide basic computer and job readiness skills. Music in the Parks (funded by the Central Valley Community Foundation) engaged families in underserved parts of the county in cultural performances and provided children with the opportunity to experience different musical instruments and music styles. These are just a few examples of large-scale grant projects of impact and relevance that FCPL has successfully managed.

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## Programming Description

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Describe your programming plans in detail. Provide details on the types of activities, target audiences for those activities, locations, and intended dates. Explain how your activities will engage audiences with your selected book.

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- Kickoff Event: Community Celebration  
Planned during Black History Month, the kickoff event at FCPL's West Fresno Branch Library will commence the project with readings from the book by local leaders of the African American community plus a celebration of local culture, including a performance from King Elementary School's African American dance troupe, a poetry slam by Fresno Poet Laureate S. Bryan Medina, and a performance of the Fresno State Gospel Choir.
  
- Keynote Event One: Claudia Rankine – Guest Speaker/ Author Talk  
FCPL will partner with Fresno City College to bring Claudia Rankine to Fresno. Her appearance will include a visit with students at a high school in Central Unified School District plus a free public reading and discussion by the author in the auditorium at Fresno City College.
  
- Keynote Event Two: Let's Talk About Race – Community Conversation  
FCPL will host a moderated panel discussion/ community conversation at the Central Library about race, inequality, the community's long history of segregation, and micro-aggressions, making accessible to the community the conversations already started by news stories in The Atlantic and Fresno Bee.
  
- Cultural Event One: Citizen: An American Lyric – The Play  
FCPL will partner with California State University-Fresno's Black Theatre Contingent to present three free performances of the stage adaptation of Citizen (script by Stephen Sachs). One performance will occur at CSU-Fresno, one at the Central Library, and one at the West Fresno Family Resource Center.
  
- Cultural Event Two: Slam Poetry with S. Bryan Medina and Inner Ear Poetry  
FCPL will present an evening with Fresno Poet Laureate S. Bryan Medina and the Inner Ear Poetry group at the Betty Rodriguez Regional Library in Fresno.
  
- Teens Only: Slam Poetry with S. Bryan Medina  
FCPL will partner with the West Fresno Family Resource Center, Edison High School, and the West Fresno Boys and Girls Club to host a teens-only open mic/ poetry slam program to promote self-expression in a safe and open environment.
  
- Teens Only: Slammin' in Your Library  
FCPL will partner with two high schools in Central Unified School District on their annual poetry contest with themes on race, micro-aggressions, and identity. Winning poems will be displayed alongside winning artwork in a display at the Central Library.
  
- Art Displays:  
An art exhibit at the Central Library will showcase artwork and poems inspired by Citizen and created by high school students from Central Unified School District, Edison High School, and the Fresno County Court School. The collection of African American artwork at the African American Cultural Museum of the San Joaquin Valley will also be highlighted during a public program of readings in the museum from the book by local leaders from the local African American community, including area churches and the Fresno Black Chamber of Commerce.
  
- Children's Programs:  
Youth librarians will lead five after-school story and activity programs featuring picture books with race, segregation, and identity as conversation starters, such as Jacqueline Woodson's The Other Side.
  
- Virtual Component:  
FCPL will use the augmented reality app, Zappar, to create a free, self-guided informational walking tour of murals

celebrating multiculturalism in the city of Fresno's downtown, West Fresno and Tower District neighborhoods. Metrics on participation will be collected through Zappar.com at the end of the project.

- Book Discussions:

Teen librarians will lead book discussions with English or creative writing classes at Edison High School (4 discussions) and with students at the Court School – Juvenile Justice Campus (1 discussion). FCPL will also partner with Fresno's Central Unified School District for book discussions at its two urban high schools (2 discussions), plus an appearance/discussion with the author at one school. Books will also be available for all ages to read and discuss in book clubs at library branches throughout Fresno County, with a minimum of at least five adult discussions countywide.

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## Partnerships Description

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(a) Describe your partnerships with libraries (as applicable) and community organizations. (b) Explain the role each partner will play in your program, the activities each partner will undertake with your organization, and whether these partnerships are confirmed or pending. (c) Explain how your partnerships will allow you to reach your intended audience(s) and strengthen or build new communities around the NEA Big Read activities.

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- African American Cultural Museum: (confirmed) Local leaders from the African American community will read passages from the book at the Museum in downtown Fresno, with a reception to follow to encourage dialogue and conversation.
  - Black Theatre Contingent, California State University – Fresno: (confirmed pending review of script) FCPL will partner with the Black Theatre Contingent to present three free performances of the stage version of Citizen: An American Lyric (script by Stephen Sachs) throughout the community.
  - Central Unified School District (CUSD): (confirmed) CUSD covers three zip codes, serving a diverse population of 129,512. FCPL will partner on the annual poetry contest, ‘Slammin’ in Your Library.’ Youth librarians will hold two book discussions with high school classes, with Claudia Rankine visiting one school for a reading/ discussion.
  - Fresno Metro Black Chamber of Commerce (FMBCC): (pending) The FMBCC provides programming and resources for entrepreneurs in the Fresno metro area. FCPL will partner with FMBCC to offer readings from Citizen by local leaders from the African American community.
  - Fresno City College: (confirmed) FCPL will partner with Fresno City College to bring Claudia Rankine to town with a presentation/ discussion at a local high school plus a free public presentation/ discussion at the large auditorium at Fresno City College.
  - Fresno County Court School – Juvenile Justice Center: (pending) FCPL will partner with the Court School to bring book discussions and art and poetry contests to incarcerated youth at the center, encouraging conversations about race and identity and outlets to encourage self-expression.
  - Fresno Unified School District (FUSD): (pending) Edison High School serves the 93706 zip code of the West Fresno community, the center of Fresno’s African American population. FCPL will partner with Edison High on a Poetry Slam, book discussions, and art contest.
  - King Elementary School’s African American Dance Troupe: (pending) The King Elementary School’s African American dance troupe started almost 20 years ago by a concerned first grade teacher aiming to provide a positive activity to build students’ characters in the West Fresno neighborhood. FCPL will partner with the dance troupe to celebrate local African American culture at the initial kickoff event. (<https://www.yourcentralvalley.com/news/local-news/inspiring-the-valley-a-fresno-elementary-african-american-dance-troupe-honored-by-fresno-police/1641932239>)
  - Inner Ear Productions: (confirmed) Inner Ear Productions aims to make poetry more accessible beyond academic institutions by offering open mic and slam poetry events with a current, energetic vibe. FCPL will partner to bring an evening of slam poetry to the Betty Rodriguez Regional Library in Central Fresno.
  - S. Bryan Medina, Fresno Poet Laureate: (confirmed) S. Bryan Medina offers an energetic approach to writing and sharing poetry. Identifying as mixed race, his poems consider identity and culture combined with rhythmic wording and exciting performances. FCPL will partner with him to offer slam poetry events for teens and adults in the West Fresno and downtown areas. ([https://www.pw.org/content/s\\_bryan\\_medina](https://www.pw.org/content/s_bryan_medina))
  - West Fresno Boys and Girls Club: (pending) The organization provides diverse programs for youth that promote character, leadership, life skills, and the arts. FCPL has previously partnered with this club on the Music in the Parks grant project, bringing a Folklorico workshop to the community center. FCPL will offer a teens-only slam poetry event with Bryan Medina.
  - West Fresno Family Resource Center (WFFRC): (confirmed) The WFFRC offers programs and support services to disadvantaged youth and their families in the West Fresno area. FCPL will partner with the WFFRC to offer poetry slams for youth to encourage positive forms of self-expression while increasing a sense of identity.
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## Promotional Description

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(a) Describe how you will promote your programming. Discuss any proposed or existing partnerships with specific media outlets. (b) Explain how your program will utilize the PDF digital resources found on arts.gov and distribute copies of your reading selection.

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- FCPL will work with existing media partners to promote the project, such as KMPH-TV 26, KSEE-TV 30, The Fresno Bee newspaper, and the community calendar at Valley Public Radio. FCPL staff will promote the Big Read through featured library spots on local media outlets.
  - FCPL will also promote the Big Read at library branches, pop-up libraries, through community partner networks, and at outreach events countywide using flyers, calendars, and other material created by the Library's internal communications department. Electronic copies of marketing materials and NEA Digital Guides will be made available through FCPL's website ([www.fresnolibrary.org](http://www.fresnolibrary.org)) and across social media platforms.
  - The NEA Digital Guides will be shared with classroom teachers and school library personnel in the four partner high schools. Teachers will be able to access materials and integrate them in the classroom through connections to the Common Core curriculum.
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## Organizer Biographies

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Outline the key individuals and/or volunteers who will plan and implement the programming, noting their anticipated roles and responsibilities in your proposed programs, and experience or capacity for managing a NEA Big Read. Include partner organizations' staff as applicable.

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- Tiffany Polfer is FCPL's Teen Programming Librarian. She is responsible for planning and coordinating countywide teen programs. In her previous position as Teen Librarian at FCPL's busiest branch, Tiffany led very successful large-scale programs with many local partners. She will help implement all components of the Big Read program, coordinating with library staff and community partners to create a successful event.
  - Krista Riggs is FCPL's Programming and Eservices Supervisor, overseeing the coordination of countywide programs for all ages. She will direct the implementation of the plan, oversee budgeting, and be available to offer support to the project as needed. She was an integral part of the 2018 Big Read at FCPL, and has successfully managed other grant projects from funders such as the California State Library (LSTA), California Endowment, California Humanities, and Califa.
  - Rocky Vang is FCPL's Community Relations Analyst. He coordinates with local media regarding all library programs and events. For this project he will be the liaison between the project coordinator and marketing outlets, making sure the message of the Big Read is heard throughout the county.
  - Caroline Shardlow is the Senior Library Assistant for FCPL's programing department. She will prepare the story-time programs, enter events on online calendars, and ensure that marketing materials are sent to outreach venues.
  - Lisa Lindsay, Manager of FCPL's Community Engagement Division, will provide administrative oversight as she did for the 2018 Big Read grant project. Lisa also provided oversight for the LSTA Digibus grant from the California State Library, as well as projects from funders such as Califa, California Humanities, the California Center for the Book, and more.
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# Fresno County Public Library

Fresno, CA

**Grant request: \$15,000**

**Book selection:** *Citizen: An American Lyric*

**Financial information:**

Previous fiscal year expenses: \$26,276,276

Current fiscal year expenses: \$30,317,476

**Project information:**

Proposed programming start date: 02-01-2020

Proposed programming end date: 03-15-2020

Number of partner organizations: 12

Number of book discussions: 12

Total number of events: 29

Anticipated total participants: 3,000

**Please describe your community you plan to reach.**

In the heart of California's Central Valley, Fresno County Public Library (FCPL) serves diverse rural, urban, and mountain communities. Programming will primarily take place in downtown Fresno, the West Fresno area, and surrounding communities. With a population of 522,053, Fresno is the fifth largest city in California and the "poorest large city" in the state. The West Fresno neighborhood is the center of Fresno's African American community, and also has large Asian-American and Mexican-American populations. The area is 60% Hispanic, 17% Black, 11% White, and 9% Asian. Fresno is ranked tenth in the country on a 24/7 Wall St report titled, "The Worst Cities for Black Americans," based on factors such as health, income, and unemployment. The Fresno metro area also has the highest concentration of poverty in the country, with a rate of 42.2%. FCPL's library branches are safe and accessible spaces to host conversations and programs about race and inequality in the community.

**Why did you choose this book for this community?**

Fresno has a long history of segregation with its own "Mason-Dixon Line," a geographic divide resulting in over 40% of Fresno's black residents living in poverty. The extreme disparity is the subject of a recent series in *The Atlantic* (<https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2018/08/fresnos-segregation/567299/>) and also the subject of conversations hosted by the Fresno Bee titled, "Crossing the Line" (<https://www.fresnobee.com/news/local/article220489205.html>). Claudia Rankine's *Citizen: An American Lyric* and related programming will influence transformative change by exploring relevant themes of micro-aggression, identity, self-image, and use of language in society. Fresno also has a history of a vibrant poetry scene. Fresno's Poet Laureate, S. Bryan Medina, is a regular partner for library programs who identifies as mixed race. Combining important themes from *Citizen* with workshops and poetry slams will allow area youth to explore self-image and identity through art and poetry.

**What are your intended outcomes for this project?**

Intended outcomes for the project will be measured via survey responses using a Likert scale. Measurable outcomes after program participation include:

- Participants will have an increased ability to recognize micro- and macro-aggressions and stereotypes based on race.
- Participants will have an increased awareness of self and identity.
- Participants will have an increased appreciation for local African American culture.
- Participants will better understand factors influencing inequality in their local community.
- Participants will have a better understanding of opportunities to influence change.
- Participants will feel safe and respected in sharing views and opinions with other program participants.

**NEA Big Read: proposal budget**

Expense	Detailed description	Source(s)	NEA Big Read Grant	Match/Cost-share			Totals	
				Applicant	Partner/Funder	In-kind	Match total	Sub total
<b>Personnel</b>	<i>Detail the cost of staff for your NEA Big Read project. This can include fringe benefits.</i>							
Programming Librarian III	200 hours @ 48.79/hr.	FCPL budget		\$9,758			\$9,758	\$9,758
Supervising Librarian III-S	120 hours @ 66.55/hr.	FCPL budget		\$7,986			\$7,986	\$7,986
Programming Senior Library Assistant	80 hours @ 37.90/hr.	FCPL budget		\$3,032			\$3,032	\$3,032
Graphic Arts Specialist II	64 hours @ 48.00/hr.	FCPL budget		\$3,072			\$3,072	\$3,072
Public Information Officer	64 hours @ 58.55/hr.	FCPL budget		\$3,747			\$3,747	\$3,747
Principal Librarian	40 hours @ 73.15/hr.	FCPL budget		\$2,926			\$2,926	\$2,926
							\$0	\$0
							\$0	\$0
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							\$0	\$0
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							\$0	\$0
<b>Program expenses</b>	<i>Detail costs associated with your NEA Big Read.</i>							
Speaker fees - Claudia Rankine	Cost to bring Claudia Rankine to Fresno for an appearance, quoted by Blue Flower Arts.	Grant funds/ FCC budget	\$10,000		\$6,000		\$6,000	\$16,000
Speaker fees - S. Bryan Medina	Total cost for three public performances/ workshops of slam poetry.	Grant funds	\$600				\$0	\$600
Children's craft supplies	Supplies for crafts to supplement five children's programs	Grant funds	\$200				\$0	\$200
Licensing fees - Citizen	Licensing fees for three performances of the stage version of Citizen (\$100/performance)	Grant funds	\$300				\$0	\$300
Books for public distribution	Costs to purchase 200 books to distribute to the public at library branches (\$15/book)	Grant funds	\$3,000				\$0	\$3,000
Hall rental for author presentation	In-kind value of using the auditorium at Fresno City College	FCC in-kind				\$1,000	\$0	\$0
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<b>Promotion</b>	<i>Detail costs associated with advertising and promoting your NEA Big Read.</i>							
Newspaper Advertisement	Cost to run an ad in the Fresno Bee Newspaper	Grant funds	\$900				\$0	\$900
Posters and Flyers	Cost to print flyers and posters from internal communications department	FCPL budget		\$500			\$500	\$500
							\$0	\$0
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<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$15,000</b>	<b>\$31,021</b>	<b>\$6,000</b>	<b>\$1,000</b>	<b>\$38,021</b>	<b>\$52,021</b>

If you'd like to offer further clarification on any expenses, please provide details below:



**CENTRAL UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
4605 North Polk Avenue · Fresno, CA 93722  
Phone: (559) 274-4700 · Fax: (559) 271-8200

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Andrew G. Alvarado

January 23, 2019

To the NEA Big Read Grant Committee:

It is an honor to write letter of support on behalf of the Fresno County Public Library to receive a grant for the book *Citizen: An American Lyric* by Claudia Rankin for the Big Read. As the supervisor of Library Services for Central Unified, a diverse school district within Fresno County, we have been fortunate to participate in the Big Read with Fresno County Public Library and know our students and community would greatly benefit from this opportunity once again.

Last year our Hmong classes all read the book *The Late Homecomer* and were fortunate to be able to hear the author when the Fresno County Public Library brought Kao Kalia Yang here to speak for the Big Read. To see the connection our high school students made with the speaker and the obvious impact it had on them was a true testament to the power of literature and the power of a program such as the Big Read. With this year's selection focusing on poetry, our annual Slammin' in Your Library contest is a perfect connection for us to make with the Big Read and the racial diversity of our student population will allow us to reach a varied audience. In addition, we have had many years of successful partnerships with the Fresno County Public Library and our teams work well together in not just the Big Read but many other programs as well.

Many years ago, Central Unified and Fresno County Public Library joined together to offer branch services at some of our rural, underserved elementary sites and this partnership has greatly benefitted our Central community. Every year we work with our County Library to get library cards into the hands of all of our students so they may access materials both in print and online. We continue to invite our public library counterparts to our Back to School Nights and Open Houses and any special events where they can connect with our Central community. As there are no library branches in our school district boundaries this partnership is crucial and allows us to offer additional resources to our students and community. We would be delighted to work with Fresno County on the Big Read and hope our community will be selected for a grant. Thank you.

Janet Wile

Supervisor, Library Services  
559-274-4700 ext 63227



The logo for the Fresno City College Speakers Forum. It features a large, stylized red letter 'S' on a red rectangular base. To the right of the 'S' is the text 'FRESNO CITY COLLEGE' in a smaller red font, and below that, 'SPEAKERS FORUM' in a larger red font.

NEA Big Read Review Panel  
Arts Midwest  
2908 Hennepin Ave, Ste. 200  
Minneapolis, MN 55408

January 18, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

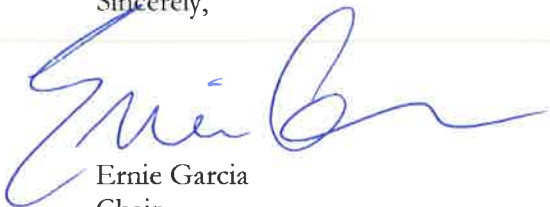
On behalf of Fresno City College (FCC) and the FCC Speaker's Forum Committee, I am pleased to submit this letter of support as a confirmed partner for Fresno County Public Library's application for the NEA's Big Read Grant. As California's first community college, FCC "provides quality, innovative educational programs and support services directed toward the enhancement of student success, lifelong learning, and the economic, social, and cultural development of our students and region." Through a core value of growth, FCC is committed to "exploring new ideas through collaboration, respect for diversity, promoting equity, and professional development."

Collaborations with FCPL related to *Citizen: An American Lyric* will be relevant and impactful to the Fresno City College community through exploration of race, identity, and inequalities and micro-aggressions in society. The book can serve as a conversation starter among students, faculty, and the community to share diverse views regarding current challenges in our town.

Fresno City College has successfully partnered with FCPL on past Big Read grant projects, including hosting Amy Tan (*The Joy Luck Club*) as well as a very powerful appearance by Kao Kalia Yang for the 2018 focus on *The Latecomer*. FCPL's mission of strengthening and transforming communities aligns with FCC's mission, as does their vision statement of "A place for anyone. Something for everyone." We look forward to continuing collaborations between organizations with programs centered on this important book in the spring of 2020. Should I be of any other assistance, please don't hesitate to contact me at 559-442-4600, x8748, or [ernie.garcia@fresnocitycollege.edu](mailto:ernie.garcia@fresnocitycollege.edu).

I look forward to working with FCPL on this exciting project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ernie Garcia".

Ernie Garcia  
Chair  
FCC Speaker's Forum Committee