



Board Agenda Item 51

DATE: July 9, 2019

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBMITTED BY: Raman Bath, Interim County Librarian

SUBJECT: Arts Midwest Application and Agreement for a National Endowment for the Arts Grant

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

1. **Retroactively authorize the County Librarian's previous submittal of a grant application to Arts Midwest on behalf of the National Endowment for the Arts for The Big Read Program to promote "Citizen: An American Lyric" by Claudia Rankine (\$15,000);**
2. **Approve and authorize the Chairman to ratify the County Librarian's previous execution of a retroactive grant award agreement and acceptance of grant funds from the National Endowment for the Arts, effective September 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020 (\$15,000);**
3. **Authorize the County Librarian, or their designee, to sign expenditure forms and activity reports for the grant agreement; and**
4. **Adopt Budget Resolution increasing FY 2019-20 appropriations and estimated revenues in the Library Grants Org 7517 in the amount of \$15,000 (4/5 vote).**

There is no Net County Cost associated with the recommended action. The Library has been awarded a \$15,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), administered through Arts Midwest, effective September 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020. The grant application was submitted contingent upon your Board's approval. The grant will provide funding that will allow the Library to implement a Big Read Program. The Program allows the library to reach out to the community of Fresno County through programs designed to engage readers and non-readers that include dance, music, discussions, and arts and crafts. This item is countywide.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

Your Board may choose not to approve the recommended actions, which will result in the Library not receiving grant funding to create NEA Big Read programming.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no Net County Cost associated with the recommended action. The Library has been awarded a \$15,000 grant from the NEA administered through Arts Midwest. The grant requires matching funds of at least a 1:1 ratio of non-Federal funding which the Library will meet with in-kind staffing costs and office expenses. Sufficient appropriations and estimated revenues for the match are included in the FY 2019-20 Recommended Budget for the Library-Measure B Org 7511. Approval of the fourth recommended action will increase FY 2019-20 appropriations and estimated revenues for the Library Grants Org 7517 in the amount of \$15,000.

DISCUSSION:

The Big Read is an initiative of the NEA in partnership with Arts Midwest that broadens our understanding of our world, our communities, and ourselves through the joy of sharing a good book. Showcasing a diverse range of contemporary titles that reflect many different voices and perspectives, the NEA Big Read aims to inspire conversation and discovery. Annually, the program supports approximately 75 dynamic community reading programs, each designed around a single NEA Big Read book. Each organization that receives an NEA Big Read grant is also provided with resources, outreach materials, and training on various aspects such as working with local partners, developing public relations strategies, and leading book discussions and Q&As. The program lasts approximately one month, and includes a kick-off event (e.g., film screenings and theatrical readings) and book discussions in diverse locations involving a wide range of audiences.

The Library decided to develop this year's Big Read Program around Claudia Rankine's "Citizen: An American Lyric". Published in 2014, "Citizen: An American" is the first work of poetry to become a New York Times bestseller and won the National Book Critics Circle Award in poetry. "Citizen: An American Lyric" is a genre-bending work that reflects on invisible racism in America by combining poetry with commentary, visual art, quotations from artists and critics, slogans, and scripts for films. Fresno has a long history of segregation with its own "Mason-Dixon Line", a geographic divide resulting in over 40% of Fresno County's black residents living in poverty. Fresno is the fifth largest city in California and the poorest large city in the state. "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.

The Library will plan events and exhibits for all ages surrounding the theme of this year's featured book at various locations throughout Fresno County, although the primary focus will be on the downtown and West Fresno areas. The Library will collaborate with many organizations including the African American Cultural Museum, Fresno City College, California State University Fresno, Central Unified School District, Inner Ear Productions, and West Fresno Family Resource Center. The Library will partner with Fresno's Poet Laureate, S. Bryan Medina to combine important themes from "Citizen: An American Lyric" with workshops and poetry events that will allow area youth to explore self-image and identity through art and poetry. The program will create an increased appreciation for African American culture while providing participants with an understanding of factors that influence inequality in their community.

The NEA posted a request for application in October 2018 via the Arts Midwest website, with a submission deadline of January 24, 2019. The Library learned of this grant opportunity at the end of December 2018. Final determination of which NEA approved reading selection the Library would choose to develop its Big Read Program around was made in mid-January 2019. The Library submitted the application on January 24, 2019, contingent upon your Board's approval. The NEA sent the award notice, dated April 28, 2019, and the Librarian signed the Award Agreement in May 2019. The second recommended action will ratify the Librarian's previous signature on the grant application and award agreement, as the Librarian signed this in order to meet the grant application and agreement deadlines.

ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED AND/OR ON FILE:

On file with Clerk - Application with Arts Midwest
On file with Clerk - Agreement with Arts Midwest
On file with Clerk - Resolution

CAO ANALYST:

Samantha Buck