

# CITY OF LOS ANGELES

CALIFORNIA

## CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION

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## DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS

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DANIEL TARICA  
GENERAL MANAGER

October 11, 2023

CF:13-1110-S10

The Honorable Karen Bass  
Mayor of Los Angeles  
Room 303, City Hall

The City Council  
C/O City Clerk  
Room 395, City Hall  
Attention: Legislative Coordinator

### **RE: REQUEST FOR APPROVAL TO RETROACTIVELY APPLY FOR AND ACCEPT A \$20,000 GRANT FROM THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS FOR THE FY23/24 BIG READ PROGRAM**

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The General Manager of the Department of Cultural Affairs respectfully requests that the City Council, subject to approval by the Mayor:

1. AUTHORIZE the General Manager of the Department of Cultural Affairs or designee to Retroactively submit a grant application to the National Endowment for the Arts for the FY 23/24 Big Read Program;
2. AUTHORIZE the General Manager of the Department of Cultural Affairs or designee to submit all necessary paperwork relative to the grant, subject to City Attorney approval as to form and content;
3. AUTHORIZE the Department of Cultural Affairs to accept \$20,000 in grant funding from the National Endowment for the Arts for the FY 23/24 Big Read Program;
4. AUTHORIZE the General Manager of the Department of Cultural Affairs or designee to negotiate and execute the grant award and agreement on behalf of the City and submit the required reporting relative to the grant, subject to City Attorney approval as to form and legality;
5. AUTHORIZE the Department of Cultural Affairs to receive and expend National Endowment for the Arts grant funds for activities for all eligible purposes for the twelve-month grant period;
6. AUTHORIZE the Controller to:
  - A. ESTABLISH a new appropriation account within Fund 337, Cultural Affairs Grants, to be labeled "NEA BIG READ FY 23/24";
  - B. APPROPRIATE \$20,000 received from the National Endowment for the Arts into the newly established account within Fund 337, "NEA BIG READ FY 23/24";
7. AUTHORIZE the General Manager of the Department of Cultural Affairs or designee to prepare any Controller's instructions needed to implement actions approved by the Council and Mayor on matters presented in, or deriving from, the transmittal, and/or to make necessary technical adjustment, and further, request that the Controller implement these instructions.



## SUMMARY

On January 27, 2023, the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) submitted a grant application to the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) for the "Big Read" program. As a result of the successful application, DCA received the maximum \$20,000 in funding from the NEA. In accordance with Los Angeles Administrative Code 14.6(b) and 14.8(c), DCA requests authority to retroactively submit this grant application utilizing the recommendations above, and authorization to subsequently accept grant funds.

## BACKGROUND

The National Endowment for the Arts Big Read program -- a partnership with nonprofit organization Arts Midwest -- broadens our understanding of our world, our neighbors, and ourselves through the power of a shared reading experience. Annually, each Big Read program features a single title to be read by all participants, and includes discussion groups along with creative projects such as: art exhibitions, film screenings, and panel discussions, among others.

The **NEA Big Read Program in Los Angeles** (program) has studied the array of cultures found in Los Angeles, with themes of assimilation, and obstacles while working to contribute to an adapted home. This year's program will feature "*Can't We Talk About Something More Pleasant?*" by author Roz Chast, a graphic novel, and a National Book Award Finalist, and NY Times #1 bestseller. This personal memoir invites readers to explore LA's Jewish history, foster cultural understanding, celebrate our elders, and learn about the art of comics.

Through reading groups and cultural activities, DCA, with core program partners: the Los Angeles Public Library (LAPL) and the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) will involve five schools strategically located in each region of the City. Community nonprofit partners include: 1) Boyle Heights Arts Conservatory, whose mission is to create pathways for youth to careers in Film, Television, and Digital Content Creation; 2) CalArts Community Arts Program; 3) Culinary Historians of Southern California, founded as an affiliate of the LAPL; 4) the Los Angeles Times Festival of Books; 5) Tia Chucha's Cultural Center in the far north of the city, with a mission to teach ancestral knowledge and advance literacy; 6) Grand Park, the City's urban heart in downtown LA operated by the LA Music Center; 7) Collage: A Place for Art and Culture in San Pedro, the most southern are of Los Angeles ; 8) Libros Schmibros Lending Library, which provides no-cost books to local residents; 9) DCA's Sony Pictures Media Arts Program; 9) Museum of African American Art; 10) United Voices of Literacy, whose pedagogy involves dramatic oral readings by students; 11) Department on Aging; and 12) LA Civil + Human Rights and Equity Department.

The experience of loss, where the child must become the caretaker, is perhaps the most profound event that all people share. While different cultures have varying rituals, the feeling of grief is at the core of our humanity. Likewise, the resilience and ability to adapt is a shared yet deeply individual experience. Examining this phase of life through the lens of the graphic novel will inspire profound dialogue for students participating at high schools and through DCA after-school programs, as well as adult residents participating in reading groups held at multiple Library branches.

The FY23/24 program will be DCA's 16<sup>th</sup> Big Read, and will run from October 2023 through June 2024. DCA estimates 15,000 people will be directly reached through online activities and in-person events. The upcoming program will have a strong presence in strategically determined areas of the City, through intentional partnerships to serve residents of the Harbor area, the San Fernando Valley, and the historic communities of downtown LA, and eastern LA neighborhoods such as Boyle Heights and Lincoln Heights.

This grant requires a minimum 1:1 matching contribution. DCA plans to meet the match for this grant through a donation in the amount of \$25,000 from SONY Corporation of America, which has been a funding partner annually.

## FISCAL IMPACT

There is no impact to the General Fund 100.

  
DANIEL TARICA  
General Manager  
Department of Cultural Affairs