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DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS

201 NORTH FIGUEROA ST, SUITE 1400
LOS ANGELES, CA 90012
213.202.5500 TEL
213.202.5513 FAX
culturela.org WEB

DANIEL TARICA
GENERAL MANAGER

October 11, 2023

CF:13-1110-S9

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 FY22/23 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 22/23 "Big Read" Program;
2. AUTHORIZE the General Manager of the Department of Cultural Affairs or designee to submit all the 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 22/23 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 22/23";
 - B. APPROPRIATE \$20,000 received from the National Endowment for the Arts into the newly established account within Fund 337, "NEA BIG READ FY 22/23";
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

In late January 2021, 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 was awarded \$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 submit this grant application in accordance with the recommendations above, and authorization to subsequently accept grant funds. FY22/23 was the fifteenth consecutive year that DCA has been awarded funding and offered this program to Angelenos.

BACKGROUND

The National Endowment for the Arts Big Read program -- a partnership with nonprofit 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.

The FY 22/23 Big Read Program (program) in Los Angeles featured the novel "Interior Chinatown," by Charles Yu. Winner of the 2020 National Book Award for Fiction, the novel explores race and assimilation through a story of an actor consigned to play consistently similar roles, and takes a satirical look at cultural stereotyping in Hollywood and popular western culture.

The program increased participation from the prior year, where COVID restrictions required all activities to be virtual. This year, with schools resuming in-person programming, the numbers of participants increased. The FY 22/23 included both online activities, and in-person reading groups. Keeping the best elements of online programs (e.g., a greater geographic access with residents participating citywide, and the ease of participating from home), while keeping public programming gave readers flexibility to participate.

The core of the Program's readers are in high school, or enrolled in after-school programs at DCA Neighborhood Youth Arts Centers or community-based organizations. Adults participate through Library partnerships throughout the 73-branch locations. The locations of schools participating is based on our mission to serve all City Council Districts, with neighborhoods added annually as funding allows. Reading and activity groups for LAUSD high-school students and DCA after-school programs ran from October 2022 through June 2023. Public events, hosted at branch libraries and nonprofit cultural centers, also ran from October 2022 through June 2023.

The FY 22/23 program included: twenty-six libraries; five public high schools; and twenty community nonprofit organizations. The program served 2,752 adults and 4,131 young people through 61 activities with 500 separate occurrences. DCA distributed 2,535 copies of the book to participating LAUSD and after-school students, and the LAPL purchased an additional 500 copies for library reading groups. The core program partners included: 1) the Los Angeles Public Library; 2) the Los Angeles Unified School District; and cultural organizations such as, 3) the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County; 4) the Los Angeles Times Festival of Books; 5) the Culinary Historians of Southern California; and, 6) the Sony Pictures Media Arts Program, a DCA program in partnership with Sony Pictures Entertainment and the California Institute of the Arts. New partnerships included: 7) Tia Chucha's Centro Cultural, founded by 2014 LA City Poet Laureate Luis Rodriguez; and, 8) The Chinese American Museum (CAM), located at El Pueblo de Los Angeles. CAM was a key partner, organizing student field trips and exhibition tours.

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