



MEDIA ALERT
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**City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs
One of 77 Organizations Nationwide
To Receive A
Big Read Grant**

**Los Angeles to Read and Celebrate
"Into the Beautiful North"
During the 2015
*Big Read Program in Los Angeles***

Los Angeles, CA - The City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) has received a \$17,000 grant to once again host the ***Big Read Program in Los Angeles***. The Big Read is a program of the National Endowment for the Arts, designed to revitalize the role of reading in American culture by exposing citizens to great works of literature and encouraging them to read for pleasure and enrichment. The Big Read is managed by Arts Midwest. DCA is one of 77 nonprofit organizations to receive a grant to host a Big Read project between September 2014 and June 2015.

NEA Acting Chairman Joan Shigekawa said, "While the act of reading is usually a solitary one, through the Big Read it will become a social one. This year's Big Read grant recipients are not only playing an important role in encouraging reading but are also developing creative opportunities to involve all members of their communities to come together to discuss and celebrate these great works on literature."

"The Big Read is a great program that not only inspires people to read, but also unites our diverse metropolis," said Mayor Garcetti. "DCA's Big Read activities will create community for thousands of Angelenos while celebrating literature and the joy of reading."

The Big Read provides communities nationwide with the opportunity to celebrate one of 36 selections from U.S. and world literature. The 77 selected organizations will receive Big Read grants to promote and carry out community-based reading programs featuring activities such as read-a-thons, book discussions, lectures, movie screenings, and performing



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arts events. The NEA has also developed high-quality, free-of-charge educational materials to supplement each title, including reader's guides, teacher's guides, and audio programming, all of which are available to the public at neabigread.org.

The 2015 *Big Read Program in LA* book selection is **"Into the Beautiful North"** by **Luis Alberto Urrea**. "Into the Beautiful North" is a novel set in the present day, in the highly charged world of the U.S. / Mexico border region. It is the story of idealistic nineteen year old Nayeli who embarks on a journey of a lifetime. The characters in the book come into contact with tensions that arise from many kinds of difference. Urrea explores, with compassion and humor, the micro-cultures within the border world and suggests that a new generation can bring new solutions to old problems.

Since 2008/09, the NEA has awarded grants to the Department of Cultural Affairs each year to produce the *Big Read Program in LA*. The program, now in its seventh year, consists of a series of activities, starting with in-school and after-school programming, and culminating with a diverse menu of participatory, engaging, and dynamic public events during a celebration of literacy in Los Angeles in April 2015.

The *Big Read Program in LA* is presented by DCA in conjunction with several organizational partners and cultural organizations that include: the Mexican Cultural Institute; the Consulate General of Mexico in Los Angeles; La Plaza de Cultura y Artes; the Chinese American Museum; the Los Angeles Unified School District; the Los Angeles Heritage Alliance; the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; the Los Angeles Public Library; the LA Harbor International Film Festival; Libros Schimbros; the Museum of the San Fernando Valley; the Craft and Folk Art Museum; the California African American Museum; Self Help Graphics; the Sony Pictures Media Arts Program; and many more. DCA's Neighborhood Arts and Cultural Centers will also participate by offering related events, art classes, and exhibitions at the Canoga Park Youth Arts Center, the William Grant Still Arts Center, the Sun Valley Youth Arts Center, the Warner Grand Theatre, and the Madrid Theatre.

Nearly 3,000 students from local high schools in culturally diverse areas of Los Angeles will join community members in reading "Into the Beautiful North," with activities offered for all ages and interests. The public is invited to participate in the *Big Read Program in LA* and enjoy the many activities offered by DCA and the program's community partners, including reading groups, discussion panels, art exhibitions, live performances, film screenings, festivals, music and dance, food lectures and tastings, visits to cultural landmarks, and walking tours.



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About DCA

The **Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA)** generates and supports high quality arts and cultural experiences for Los Angeles' 4 million residents and 40 million annual overnight and day visitors. DCA advances the social and economic impact of the arts and ensures access to diverse and enriching cultural activities through: grantmaking, marketing, development, public art, community arts programming, arts education, and building partnerships with artists and arts and cultural organizations in neighborhoods throughout the City of Los Angeles.

DCA's projected operating budget and managed portfolio totals \$52 million in fiscal year 2013/14. It consists of: \$13.4 million in City related and indirect cost allocations; \$10.5 million in Transient Occupancy Tax funds; \$9 million in one-time City funding; \$9 million in funds from the Public Works Improvements Arts Program (PWIAP); \$7.5 million from the Private Arts Development Fee Program (ADF); and \$2.4 million raised to date this fiscal year in private and public funds from foundation, corporate, government, and individual donors.

DCA significantly supports artists and cultural projects through its Public Art Division by administering a portfolio totaling \$16.5 million in PWIAP and ADF funds in FY13/14. Of this amount, typically 15% to 20%, or between \$2.5 and \$3.3 million, is attributable to artists' fees.

DCA's Marketing and Development Division has raised \$26 million over the last 12 fiscal years to re-grant to LA-based artists and arts and cultural organizations, and to support DCA's special programming and facilities. DCA also grants approximately \$2.3 million annually to 268 artists and nonprofit arts and cultural organizations through its long-established Grants Administration Division. Additional special project support of more than \$1.5 million is also awarded annually for a total of approximately \$3.8 million invested each year in LA's creative community.

DCA provides arts and cultural programming through its Community Arts Division, managing numerous neighborhood arts and cultural centers, theaters, historic sites, and educational initiatives. DCA's Marketing and Development Division also markets the City's arts and cultural events through development and collaboration with strategic partners, design and production of creative catalogs, publications, and promotional materials, and management of the culturela.org website visited by over 3 million people annually.

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