Grant request: $19,714
Book selection: *The House on Mango Street*

**Project information:**
Proposed programming start date: 02-02-2022
Proposed programming end date: 04-30-2022
Number of partner organizations: 6
Number of book discussions: 16
Total number of events: 56
Anticipated total participants: 3,300

**Panelist notes:**
The mission of the Public Library of Mount Vernon and Knox County (PLMVKC) is to select, make available and maintain resources in a variety of formats, meeting the educational, informational, cultural and recreational needs of our patrons. The Library uses four guiding principles for programming and patron services: information, imagination, innovation, and inspiration. These pillars allow the Library to fulfill our mission and support patron learning, growth, curiosity, success and quality of life. The “Mount Vernon Public Library” was chartered in 1888 as a municipal library; over time, our official name, material resources and services have evolved. PLMVKC’s collection has expanded from hardcover books, periodicals and a few music records to include paperbacks, videocassettes, audiotapes, CDs and DVDs, and a myriad of electronic, streaming and web-based services as we keep pace with 21st century innovation. Each week, there are over 20 programs at our Main and Branch libraries: from infant and toddler lapsit storytimes, to elementary age STEAM programs, our thriving Teen MakerSpace, Adult book discussions, lectures, films, crafting seminars and creative writing classes. PLMVKC patrons can access professional reference services; a local history and genealogy resource room; and libraries statewide through multiple network services. In addition to the main library in Mount Vernon, PLMVKC operates branch facilities in nearby Fredericktown, Danville and Gambier, and a countywide Outreach Service that delivers materials to home-bound patrons, preschools and daycares, assisted living/long-term care facilities and the Knox County Jail.

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

Our organization last hosted Big Read activities in 2009, with a theatrical staging of Louise Erdrich’s *Love Medicine*, Native American storytelling and music from First Nations community members, lectures, book discussions, and art projects. We’ve previously hosted Smithsonian traveling exhibitions that drew several thousand people to events, including “Key Ingredients: America by Food” and “New Harmonies: Celebrating American Roots Music.” In 2016, PLMVKC presented the Ohio Department of Humanities “Latinos in Rural America” (LiRA) exhibition, curated by Kenyon College Professor Dr. Clara Román-Ódio. LiRA was a digital humanities project that provided “an intimate window into the lives, journeys and aspirations of Latinos in Knox County, Ohio”; LiRa events attracted hundreds of local residents, as well as visitors and from outlying areas.

The Big Read is a big project; but PLMVKC is accustomed to reaching a diverse audience as part of our everyday practice. As an “anchor institution” in Knox County, our library is uniquely positioned to implement Big Read programming by leveraging our own expertise in presenting quality events and the strong, collegial partnerships we’ve formed with community stakeholders to reach diverse populations. PLMVKC’s Teen Writing Program partners with national nonprofit youth organization *The BreakBread Literacy Project* to deliver high-quality workshops taught by a remarkable roster of visiting writers. The Library frequently collaborates with Mount Vernon Nazarene University and Kenyon College faculty, and partners with Ohioana Book Festival to present teen programming. Our longtime collaboration with The Kenyon Review’s Literary Festival includes “KnoxReads” book giveaway, lecture series, and creative writing workshops. Our six-week long annual Summer Reading Program engages patrons at all five PLMVKC libraries, features live entertainment for children and adults; attracting 800-1000 youth patrons, and over 800 adults. Our library system is a community hub, thanks to partnerships and a highly qualified, dedicated staff; this lets us serve as a beacon to community members from all walks of life and equips us to successfully present a successful NEA Big Read.
Project description narrative (no more than three pages)

- Provide a rationale for your chosen NEA Big Read book.

The Public Library of Mount Vernon and Knox County (PLMVKC) chose Sandra Cisneros’ *The House on Mango Street* because of the book’s lyric beauty, innovative storytelling structure, its thematic explorations on working class, Midwestern, LatinX lives—especially the lives of women. These elements combine to create a work more powerful in the sum of its parts, which will resonate strongly in our community and provide many opportunities for cross-cultural understanding. PLMVKC also chose this book because of its broad appeal to a variety of readers: many of the short vignettes are appropriate for readers of virtually all ages. Set in the Midwest, *The House on Mango Street* offers another perspective on LatinX experiences. PLMVKC’s Big Read activities seek to cultivate more nuanced understandings of LatinX lives through literature, film, dance, art, and authentic foodways. At a time of great social disunity, *The House on Mango Street* provides a story that invites all readers to connect through the very human experience of growing up, finding your voice, achieving autonomy, and seeking a place to call home.

- Describe the community you plan to reach with NEA Big Read programming. For example, a community may be a geographic area, a demographic, or both.

Knox County is located in rural north-central Ohio, a 60-75 minute commute from downtown Columbus. The Library serves over 60,000 Knox County residents and draws patrons from bordering Morrow, Licking, and Richland counties. Mount Vernon is the Knox county seat, and its historic downtown features many shops, restaurants, and performing arts venues. Mount Vernon also has a large commercial retail district; a hospital; industrial, agricultural and professional service industries, and numerous small businesses. Knox County is home to the scenic Kokosing River water trail, the Kokosing Gap Trail bike and pedestrian path, and many athletic facilities. Residents’ cultural, economic, and intellectual lives are enriched by proximity to Mount Vernon Nazarene University and Kenyon College. The population of Knox County, Ohio is 62,322\(^1\), 94.6% self-reports race as white. Additional demographics represented include 1.1% African-American; 0.3% American Indian/Alaska Native; 0.6% Asian; 1.6% Hispanic/Latino; 1.4% Two or more races. Nearly 20% of Knox County residents are over age 65. While 91.3% of residents have a high school diploma, only 23% of persons over age 25 have a Bachelor’s degree. This is a predominantly working-class and working poor community. Poverty and underemployment are significant barriers to well-being: only 61% of people over age 16 are in the civilian labor force. While the median household income in Knox County is $57,749 for a family of four, the per capita income is only $26,390; this is nearly $20,000 a year shy of the estimated $45,000 per year required for single residents to afford home ownership, transportation, and healthcare. A 2018 report, *The State of Poverty in Knox County, Ohio\(^2\)* estimates that 1 in 5 Knox Countians miss four or more meals each week. Given our demographics, this book will resonate with many area residents, who will see their lives reflected in her struggle and perhaps find hope in Cisneros’s message of self-determination, and build relationships with our growing LatinX population through this Big Read activity.

- Describe your programming plans in detail. Be sure that your plans meet the programming requirements explained above, and address the themes, writing, and content of the NEA Big Read book.

- Provide details on the types of activities, target audiences for those activities, locations, and intended dates.

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\(^1\) 2020 U.S. Census estimate.

Big Read Kickoff: Our kickoff celebration features a mayoral proclamation, local press, and a livestreamed podcast of the PLMVKC Brown Bag Chat keynote speech on Sandra Cisneros’ *The House on Mango Street* and Cisneros’ contributions to literature. The kickoff also launches the Big Read Book Giveaway. *Audience*: 500+ adults and teens. (Feb. 2, Book Giveaway through Feb. 28).

Thursday Book Discussions: PLMVKC Librarians lead two, month-long discussion series on Sandra Cisneros’ *The House on Mango Street* and *My Wicked, Wicked Ways* (poetry). The books will also be featured on PLMVKC’s weekly “What Are You Reading?” podcast and posted on our YouTube Channel. *Audience*: 80+ adults. (March 1-April 30).

Sandra Cisneros: Meet the Author: A virtual reading, craft talk, and Q & A with Sandra Cisneros about her life and work. This event will be live streamed via Facebook and YouTube Channel. Includes a reception for in-person attendees. *Audience*: 100+ adults and teens. (April).

Tales from La Vida: The World of LatinX Comics: Interactive lecture and drawing activity by comics scholar Frederick Luis Aldama, of Ohio State University. Introduces overview of LatinX comics and graphic literature for artists aged 12+. *Audience*: 50-75 teens/adults. (March 12.)

Latinos in Rural America (LiRA): A presentation from Dr. Clara Roman-Odío, whose LIRA project includes subjects from communities in Knox County. *Audience*: 50+ adults. (April)

Poetry Potluck with Ada Limón: Community creative writing workshop, reading and potluck-style meal with poet Ada Limón, a LatinX writer inspired by Sandra Cisneros’ work, at the Brown Family Environmental Center. *Audience*: 50-75 adult/teens. (March 20.)

Film Discussion Series: A dynamic exploration of LatinX history and contemporary life, moderated by Kenyon College professors and Adelante (LatinX student organization at Kenyon College.) Selections include: *Zoot Suit; Dolores; Separated: Migrant Children at the Border; Real Women Have Curves;* and *Tortilla Soup.* Invites patrons to discuss contemporary issues of race, politics and culture with expert insight from scholars. *Audience*: 100 adults. (March/April)

Stories from Our Streets: A weekly creative writing workshop that creates digital storytelling projects about growing up in Mount Vernon and Knox County. College students will collaborate with community members to document and digitally illustrate narrative vignettes, culminating in a showcase and panel talk at PLMVKC (April 27) and at the Wright Center for Community Partnerships (April 29). *Audience*: 100+ adults. (March-April)

Dance with me/Bailar Conmigo: The Kenyon College Department of Dance offers free workshops in LatinX folk and popular dances for patrons of all ages and abilities at PLMVKC libraries. Participants will share the language of dance and movement as means of storytelling. *Audience*: 100+, all ages. (February/March/April)

Brown Bag Chats: PLMVKC’s lunchtime discussion series hosts 3 Big Read events: An introduction to *The House On Mango Street* (Kickoff event); followed by two events on authentic LatinX foodways: “All About Mexican Food” w/ demo and tasting menu from the chefs at Fiesta Mexicana; “Panaderia: Mexican Pastries” w/ Library Cooking Club. *Audience*: 100+ adults. (Feb. 2, March 2, April 13.)

LatinX StoryTime: PLMVKC hosts weekly series of infant, toddler and elementary-age storytimes and craft programs featuring books by LatinX authors. Introduces parents and young readers to LatinX literature and stories. *Audience*: 100+ children/adults. (March/April).

Sunday Family Movie: A weekend film series for families. Films include *Bless Me, Ultima, Stand and Deliver,* and *Coco.* Broadens patrons’ exposure to LatinX lives through film, and links to themes prevalent in *The House on Mango Street.* *Audience*: 75-100, all ages. (February 6, March 6, April 3).

Poem In Your Pocket Day: Volunteers from *Kenyon Review* Associates Program will curate a broad selection of LatinX poetry and distribute poems throughout Knox County in collaboration with local bookstores, coffee shops, and other businesses. *Audience*: 1000+ all ages. (April 6).

Mango Street in the MakerSpace: PLMVKC MakerSpace will present a series of projects based on traditional Mexican/ChicanX folk arts and crafts, including metal tooling, weaving, sugar skulls, clay/ceramic arts, and musical instruments. Introduces teen artists/crafters to LatinX traditions,
aesthetics, and practice that underscore Cisneros’ experience as a budding artist in *The House on Mango Street*. **Audience:** 200+ teens. (March-April).

**Tell Your Story: Teen Book-Making:** For eight weeks, PLMVKC Teen Writing Program participants will read and discuss *The House on Mango Street* and create their own books with nonfiction vignettes and poems about their lives, using collage, and book-binding. **Audience:** 25+ teens. (March-April)

**Big Read Closing Celebration: El Corazon de Mexico Ballet Folklorico at Woodward Opera House:** A free performance, workshop, and Q & A by Toledo-based El Corazon de Mexico Ballet Folklorico at the Woodward Opera House. This closing event celebrates Big Read Activities and LatinX life in the Midwest at one of the premiere historic performance venues in the nation. **Audience:** 500+ children, teens, and adults. (April 30).

**Closing Celebration Exhibits:** The afternoon of the Ballet Folklorico Performance, patrons can browse an installation in the Woodward Opera House lobby showcasing art from the Teen MakerSpace; browse through the “Tell Your Story” Teen Book Making project; and watch videos of “Stories from our Streets” in an interactive installation. There will be LatinX food truck vendors outdoors, and light refreshments from local restaurateur Fiesta Mexicana in the lobby after the Ballet Folklorico performance. **Audience:** 500+ children, teens, and adults. (April 30).

- **Explain how your activities will be inclusive and engage diverse audiences.**
  PLMVKC designed programming for Big Read activities into many already-popular library series that draw patrons of diverse interests and backgrounds: Book Discussions, Brown Bag Chat, Film series, StoryTime, Poetry Potluck, Creative Writing programs, dance and arts events. Outreach by PLMVKC and partner organizations invites returning and new patrons that includes and engages all our valued community members in PLMVKC Big Read events. Our programming strives to present inclusive opportunities that provide authentic insight into LatinX life and culture, from LatinX scholars living in our community and from across Ohio.

- **Describe how you will promote your programming to a wide range of audiences.**
  PLMVKC has several robust, in-house resources for designing outreach materials, including staff with expertise in graphic design, web design, videography, and publicity. We plan to create traditional print materials (posters, flyers, brochures and advertisements) in English and Spanish, and run English/Spanish print and web advertisements in local newspapers, and on PLMVKC social media. PLMVKC digital marketing is expansive, with a mailing list of over 30,000 library patrons and a lively social media presence. Additionally, our staff will design public service announcements in English and Spanish for local commercial and college radio stations to advertise our Big Read activities celebrating *The House on Mango Street* and Cisneros’ contributions to literature.

- **Explain how your program will distribute copies of your chosen NEA Big Read book and optional companion title(s).**
  *The House on Mango Street* will be available at all four PLMVKC locations in Knox County. Volunteers and staff will also distribute *The House on Mango Street* at a variety of locations across Knox County: The Kenyon College Bookstore, Paragraphs Bookstore, Central Ohio Technical College, Mount Vernon Nazarene University, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, the United Way, Knox County Hospice, the Main Library, WalMart, Knox County Health Department and branch libraries in Danville, Fredericktown and Gambier, and in local high school libraries. PLMVKC Outreach Services will also distribute *The House on Mango Street* to persons living in detention facilities, homebound patrons, New Directions Domestic Violence Shelter clients, and residents of local nursing homes/health rehabilitation centers. In addition to distributing several hundred copies of *The House on Mango Street*, we are also providing free copies of *My Wicked, Wicked Ways* to Thursday Book Discussion participants and copies of Ada Limón’s *The Carrying* and *All We Can Save* to Poetry Potluck participants.
Project partnerships description narrative (no more than two pages)

- Describe your partnerships with libraries (as applicable) and community organizations.
- 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.

The Public Library of Mount Vernon and Knox County will leverage established, longstanding partnerships and new collaborations to implement NEA Big Read activities around *The House on Mango Street*. Many of our project collaborations overlap and involve multiple organizations.

*The Kenyon Review (KR)* lends its many talents, expert staff, and volunteers to Big Read events. Editor-in-Chief Nicole Terez Dutton will moderate one of our premiere events, the virtual Author Visit with Sandra Cisneros. The *KR*’s outreach department continues its support of Library programming through the Poetry Potluck, providing student volunteers and attendees to the author visit and workshop with renowned poet Ada Limón. *KR*’s “Poem In Your Pocket Day” event volunteers will disseminate LatinX poetry to locations across Knox County, piquing public interest in our Big Read events. *KR* will provide student volunteers to help with event management; lead Teen Writing Program workshops on LatinX authors and assist with the “Tell Your Story” book making project; and will publicize Big Read events within the *Kenyon Review* Associates program and College community, boosting student participation and community engagement through event attendance.

The Brown Family Environmental Center (BFEC) will host PLMVKC’s Poetry Potluck with Ada Limón, providing in-kind support via venue space, event management and custodial staff for the workshop, reading, and community meal. The BFEC mailing list helps the Poetry Potluck draw an eclectic cross-section of local writers, college students and high-school participants from the PLMVKC Teen Writing Program.

*Kenyon College’s Office for Community Partnerships (OCP)* will take a central role in Big Read by connecting PLMVKC with Kenyon College faculty, whose expertise in LatinX literature, history, and culture are an integral part of our program. OCP will also serve as the site of our Big Read Digital storytelling workshop, providing free classroom and screening room space where students and local residents gather to develop digital narratives about Knox County. “Stories From Our Streets” will be screened at OCP’s Wright Center, at PLMVKC, and in the lobby of the historic Woodward Opera House during our closing event with El Corazon de Mexico Ballet Folklorico. In our previous collaborations, OCP’s strong relationship with LatinX student groups like ADELANTE, the Black Student Union, and the Sisterhood significantly increases student attendance at PLMVKC events.

Belinda Craig-Quijada, Professor of Dance, has agreed to present a series of free dance workshops and master classes at PLMVKC sites. The classes are open to everyone: college students, staff, local families, and elders. The workshops will explore several styles of folk dance, with an emphasis on LatinX contemporary and traditional popular forms, and will engage patrons of all ages and abilities. Professor Craig-Quijada’s students will attend the Ballet Folklorico performance as part of their coursework in the Dance Department’s curriculum.
PLMVKC welcomes the formation of a new community partnership with the Mount Vernon Arts Consortium. The Consortium will provide the Woodward Opera House at a steeply discounted rate, effectively co-sponsoring our closing ceremonies for the Big Read. This event is going to be very special for our community; free performances are few and far between, and legendary Toledo-based El Corazon de Mexico Ballet Folklorico’s performance at the beautifully renovated Woodward Opera House will be a highly engaging event. The Woodward Opera House is a “crown jewel” in Mount Vernon’s historic downtown; its status as a National Landmark and the nation’s oldest authentic 19th Century Theater immediately raise the profile of PLMVKC’s Big Read events.

At the time of grant submission, the logistics of additional Big Read partnerships are underway. PLMVKC has reached out to area high school librarians and Spanish teachers about integrating Cisneros’ *The House on Mango Street* into the curriculum, and bringing Big Read events to school libraries. PLMVKC is also in conversation with community collaborators, including Mount Vernon Nazarene University’s Office of Diversity and Inclusion and Department of English; Mayor, Matt Starr, City of Mount Vernon; independent bookstores and proposed Big Read Book Giveaway locations.

- Explain how your partnerships will allow you to reach your intended audience(s) and engage individuals of diverse backgrounds and ability levels. Discuss any proposed or existing partnerships with specific media outlets.

These partnerships allow us to reach community members across all demographic strata in our community and engage Knox County residents of all ages and backgrounds in Big Read activities. As with any “college town,” community members unaffiliated with institutions of higher education sometimes struggle to connect and find mutual ground with university staff and students. However, we have seen great success in bridging that divide through previous collaborations that bring those communities together to enjoy literature, local history and the arts.

PLMVKC does not have a formal partnership with local media. However, Library Director John Chidester presents an hourlong, weekly radio show on WMVO that discusses Library programs and events. Both Kenyon College and Mount Vernon Nazarene University have student-run radio stations that are popular in our community, with whom we plan to place paid public-service announcements in English and Spanish advertising Big Read events. PLMVKC has a collegial relationship with local news outlets, both of which routinely feature staff-submitted articles about Library events.
Project personnel description (one page)

- Outline the key personnel from the applicant organization and partner organizations and what role(s) they will have in implementing your proposed activities. Include volunteers as applicable.

John K. Chidester has served as director of the Public Library of Mount Vernon and Knox County since 1976, during which PLMVKC holdings grew from print, to analog, to digital. He holds a Bachelor’s degree in English and a Master’s degree in Library Science, and is a veteran of the United States Air Force and the Ohio Air National Guard. Under his leadership, PLMVKC continues to present hundreds of innovative library programs each year, develop collaborations with community organizations, and has received multiple grants from the NEA, NEH, the Smithsonian Institution, the American Library Association, and Ohio Department of Humanities.

Cassandra Peters, Library Assistant Director. Seven years experience with programming and Library Management at PLMVKC, holds an MLIS from Kent State University. Cassandra manages the Main Library, circulation staff, and other front-facing employees whose role in promoting and managing the Big Read is an integral part of our daily operations. She will also work with branch libraries and Outreach to manage the book giveaway.

Jessica Horlacher, Digital Resource Manager at PLMVKC. Jessica holds a BA in Business Forensics and Business Administration, and a Masters in Business Administration. She has 13 years experience at PLMVKC, where she manages website management, social media, online services, marketing, advertising, technology education, and adult services programming. Jessica will manage publicity for The Big Read, and coordinate the Brown Bag Chat programs.

Chris Sherman, PLMVKC Multimedia Communications Specialist. Chris has a BA in Digital Media Design and over 15 years experience in IT and Graphic Design. His role at PLMVKC includes graphics/poster design, recording and editing programs for the Library’s YouTube channel, providing IT support for events, audio-visual projects, Library software and hardware management. Chris is charged with recording, editing and streaming all Big Read events and providing tech/IT support to make our programs accessible to all patrons.

Jamie Lyn Smith-Fletcher serves as Development and Writing Program Manager at PLMVKC. She has an MFA in Creative Writing, a Masters in Education and over 15 years experience teaching at colleges and universities, high schools, and arts enrichment programs, as well as extensive background in event management experience as a production manager in theatre. She will serve as PLMVKC’s Big Read project coordinator: managing programming, partnerships, and events in collaboration with Library staff and community collaborators.

- Explain how these individuals will help engage diverse audiences with your selected book and promote inclusive experiences.

PLMVKC has a forty year track record of delivering ambitious Library programs that build goodwill, trust, respect, and inclusiveness into our everyday library work; from catalog holdings, to lectureships; to exhibits; and collaborations. In addition to the substantial in-house expertise of our PR/Media team, PLMVKC’s Big Read partners were intentionally assembled to include community stakeholders who are also “movers and shakers”. With connections to diverse communities in Knox County, each partner in The Big Read brings a different constituency to library programs. In addition to confirmed partnerships, PLMVKC has reached out to the Diversity and Inclusion programs at Kenyon College and Mount Vernon Nazarene University; Spanish teachers and Librarians at local high schools; community leaders and elected officials in Mount Vernon and Knox County; and to clergy and laity who coordinate the Knox County Diversity Coalition’s “Overcoming Racism” program. This committed group of individuals allow PLMVKC to reach a broad audience as well as underrepresented community members whose participation is integral to our success in implementing an NEA Big Read.
On behalf of the Office for Community Partnerships and Kenyon College, I am pleased to support the Public Library of Mount Vernon & Knox County’s application for the Big Read grant from the National Endowment for the Arts for 2022 programming around “The House on Mango Street,” by Sandra Cisneros.

The Public Library of Mount Vernon and Knox County has been a partner with Kenyon for many years. The Library is an organization that we have identified as one of our key partners for current and future outreach efforts into the wider Knox County community. Like many public libraries, ours is an important part of our community’s social infrastructure. The Library is a place where everyone is welcome, there is a wide range of opportunities to engage, and services are free.

The Office for Community Partnerships and Kenyon College are excited about working with the Library to ensure the success of the proposed Big Read programming. We welcome the opportunity to engage faculty and students with Big Read events and to offer available space at the Wright Center. Kenyon faculty have interest and expertise in literature, Spanish language and culture. Kenyon also has a well-established student organization, ADELANTE, that promotes Latin American and Latinx culture and a student produced newspaper, “A Medio Camino.” These groups are likely to take a strong interest in the proposed programming. In addition, Kenyon has been training faculty and students in the creation of digital stories. Our Center for Innovative Pedagogy welcomes the opportunity to collaborate with the Library to collect local stories of growing up in Knox County as part of the Big Read program.

The Public Library of Mount Vernon & Knox County is known for both the volume and breadth of its community programming. Jamie Lyn Smith-Fletcher and Library staff have expanded creative writing workshops and generated new enthusiasm for partnerships. Her organizational skills, energy, and passion uniquely qualify her to develop and implement this undertaking. We welcome the opportunity to support the Big Read program and connect it with Kenyon’s faculty, staff, and students.

Sincerely,

Jan E. Thomas, PhD
Senior Advisor for Community Relations &
Director of the Office for Community Partnerships
January 14th, 2021

To whom it may concern:

I am writing today to share the support of the Mount Vernon Arts Consortium and the Woodward Opera House for the Mount Vernon Public Library of Mount Vernon and Knox County, and their 2022 Latinx Reading Program and Ballet Folklorico event. We applaud their decision to bring programs that encourage literacy, education, and diversity to our community, and are thankful that the Woodward Opera House has been offered the chance to host this event.

Because this program will be offered free of charge and directly benefit our local communities, we are happy to offer our venue at a discounted rental rate of $1,300, down from our regular rental rate of $1,800. This rate includes stage access, all lighting and audio equipment, dressing rooms, audience seating in both floor and balcony, front-of-house staff, and marketing assistance. Our traditional technical staffing rates of $35 per hour for a technical director, $20 per hour for stagehands, and $15 per hour for technical board operators will apply as needed.

The Mount Vernon Arts Consortium and the Woodward Opera House hope that as planning for this event proceeds, we are able to find additional ways to support and promote the Public Library of Mount Vernon and Knox County and their programming.

Sincerely,

Megan Evans
Facilities Rental Manager
Mount Vernon Arts Consortium
National Endowment for the Arts  
400 7th Street SW  
Washington, DC 20506

January 18, 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

It is with great pleasure that I write to you on behalf of the Brown Family Environmental Center to lend support for “The Big Read” grant application submitted by Ms. Jamie Lyn Smith-Fletcher of the Public Library of Mount Vernon and Knox County. “The Big Read” will support community reading and engagement programs in Knox County, Ohio.

I have worked with Ms. Smith-Fletcher in the past to provide poetry programming for the community. These past programs epitomized the value of partnerships: cross-pollination of constituents that widened our audiences and exposed participants to another community asset.

The Brown Family Environmental Center is committed to partnering with local organizations in an effort to foster a true sense of community. The library’s mission to “stimulate ideas and learning and to enhance the quality of life” for their patrons runs parallel to our commitment to engage a wide range of viewpoints and to embrace diverse cultures and identities while striving to provide equitable access to opportunities that nurture a sense of place.

This collaborative project will offer the combined expertise and resources of both the Brown Family Environmental Center and the Public Library of Mount Vernon and Knox County in order to better serve our local community.

Thank you in advance for your support of this partnership.

Respectfully,

Noelle Jordan, Manager
January 22, 2021

Jamie Lyn Smith-Fletcher  
Development and Writing Program Manager  
Public Library of Mount Vernon & Knox County  
201 N. Main Street, Mount Vernon, OH 43050

Dear Jamie Lyn,

Thank you for including the Kenyon Review (KR) in your plans for the NEA Big Read in 2022. Throughout the years, the support of the Public Library of Mount Vernon and Knox County (PLMVKC) has been invaluable in our outreach to the Knox County community. From creative writing workshops and book discussions to readings and film screenings, our partnership with PLMVKC has enabled KR to reach a broad audience of community members and provide literary engagement for readers and writers of all ages. We would be delighted to continue this partnership and help with your Big Read programming.

While I am sure we will find many more opportunities for KR to assist as plans continue to develop and grow, here are a few ways in which we can commit to helping with the Big Read:

- **Volunteers:** With 90+ ambitious and talented Kenyon college students participating in our selective Kenyon Review Associate program, we can provide many enthusiastic volunteers to help with planning, setting up, and otherwise assisting with several Big Reads events.

- **Youth Outreach:** KR Associates plan and run a variety of community youth outreach projects throughout the year, and would welcome the opportunity to incorporate Sandra Cisneros, Ada Limon, and other LatinX writers and artists into the curriculum for their elementary school writing workshops at Paragraphs Bookstore, and the literary activities we provide at community events like the Brown Family Environmental Center Earth Day Celebration. KR Associates will also continue to assist with the Library’s Teen Writing Workshops in whatever ways they can.

- **Poem in Your Pocket Day:** The timing of the Big Read aligns perfectly with our annual Poem-In-Your-Pocket Day celebration in April. Each year, KR Associates collect and distribute hundreds of poems throughout campus in conjunction with free readings by visiting poets. The celebration encourages community members to read poems to one another and to use these poems as a fun way to engage with diverse poetic voices and spark creative conversations. While this event typically takes place on the Kenyon College campus, the Big Read would provide a wonderful opportunity to expand our audience and include the broader Knox County community in the celebration. KR Associates could curate a broad selection of LatinX poetry for the event, and in addition to distributing
poems on campus, they could coordinate with local bookstores, coffee shops, and other business to provide poems and programming related to these authors. KR could also reach out to inspiring LatinX poets as our Poem In Your Pocket Day visiting readers; the breadth and depth of Big Read programming surrounding these readings would help us attract renowned visiting poets along with a wider audience of readers.

- **Publicity**: KR can assist with publicity for many of these events by listing details on our Reading Series website, promoting certain events via email, and posting about Big Read programming on our social media platforms.

- **Tech support**: After a year of planning and running countless virtual readings, webinars, discussions, workshops and more, many KR staff members are well-versed in the best practices for virtual events. We would be happy to provide technical support for Zoom webinars and other virtual events the might be part of the Big Read programming.

I am truly excited to collaborate with PLMVKC on these events and grateful for our continued partnership. I look forward coordinating with you as plans take shape!

Please don’t hesitate to be in touch if you have any questions or ideas about additional ways in which KR can support this effort.

Sincerely,

Tory Weber
Associate Director of Programs and Fellowships
Kenyon Review
**NEA Big Read: proposal budget**

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<tr>
<th>Expense Description</th>
<th>NEA Big Read Grant</th>
<th>Applicant</th>
<th>Partner/Funder</th>
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<td>Library- Assistant Director</td>
<td>Manage branch library activities, assign and oversee staff activities and program plans. (3 hours/week * 12 weeks at $33.13/hour)</td>
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<td>Library- Multimedia Communications Specialist</td>
<td>Videography, media installation, event recording/editing, graphic design. (128 hours at 23.05/hour)</td>
<td>Applicant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$2,950</td>
<td>$2,950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library- Digital Resource Manager</td>
<td>Web management, advertising, social media, online calendars, adult programs, technical support. (72 hours @ 23.14/hour)</td>
<td>Applicant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$2,221</td>
<td>$2,221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programming Staff-2</td>
<td>2 programming staff for Brown Bag Chat events (24 hours at 21.86/hour)</td>
<td>Applicant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$525</td>
<td>$525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Manager/Custodial Supervisor</td>
<td>Event set up, tear down, cleaning, security and maintenance (48 hours at $26.73/hour)</td>
<td>Applicant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$1,283</td>
<td>$1,283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building management/ custodial staff-2</td>
<td>Assist with set up, tear down, cleaning, security and maintenance (2 x 48 hours at $15.34/hour)</td>
<td>Applicant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$1,473</td>
<td>$1,473</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MakerSpace Coordinator/Children's Storytime</td>
<td>Create and present art/craft programs, plan and implement children's storytime events (96 hours at $19.04/hour)</td>
<td>Applicant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$1,827</td>
<td>$1,827</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MakerSpace Coordinator II</td>
<td>Create and present art/craft programs (64 hours at $13.93/hour)</td>
<td>Applicant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$892</td>
<td>$892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children's Librarian- Manager</td>
<td>Coordinate, plan, and implement storytime and craft events (36 hours at $30.35/hour)</td>
<td>Applicant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$1,092</td>
<td>$1,092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children's Librarian- Program Staff</td>
<td>Coordinate, plan, and implement storytime and craft events (36 hours at $30.35/hour)</td>
<td>Applicant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$818</td>
<td>$818</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference/Programming Librarians-2</td>
<td>Plan and implement book club, podcast and adult reading events (64 hours at $20.49/hour)</td>
<td>Applicant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$1,311</td>
<td>$1,311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Program expenses</strong></td>
<td>Detail costs associated with your NEA Big Read.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker Fees</td>
<td>1 hour virtual visit with Sandra Cisneros</td>
<td>NEA Grant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$2,500</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker Fees, Lodging, Travel &amp; Meals</td>
<td>Author visit, workshop, Q &amp; A with Ada Limon (pending)</td>
<td>NEA Grant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$4,000</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker Fees</td>
<td>Presentation and Comics workshop with Frederick Luis Aldama</td>
<td>NEA Grant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$2,000</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art Supplies</td>
<td>6 weeks art/craft supplies for Teen MakerSpace and Toddler/Elementary Storytime Craft</td>
<td>NEA Grant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$552</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Giveaway- Cisneros</td>
<td>500 Free copies of The House on Mango Street (English and Spanish) for community</td>
<td>NEA Grant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$3,000</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venue Rental- Brown Family Environmental Center</td>
<td>50 copies of Ada Limon's The Carrying/All We Can Save for Poetry Potluck Participants</td>
<td>NEA Grant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$400</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venue Rental- Woodward Opera House</td>
<td>25 copies of Cisneros' My Wicked, Wicked Ways (poems) for Book Club participants</td>
<td>NEA Grant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$250</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venue Rental- Woodward Opera House</td>
<td>Woodward Opera House (reduced fee for Library event) for Ballet Folklorico</td>
<td>NEA Grant/ Partner In-Kind</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$1,300</td>
<td>$800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Staff- Woodward Operate House</td>
<td>Technical Staff required for Ballet Folklorico Event</td>
<td>NEA Grant/ Partner In-Kind</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$560</td>
<td>$800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bus passes</td>
<td>Knox Area Transit, local bus passes for low-income and rural patrons</td>
<td>Applicant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>$500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Fee- Ballet Folklorico</td>
<td>El Corazon de Mexico Ballet Folklorico performance, audience Q &amp; A, and workshop</td>
<td>NEA Grant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$1,700</td>
<td>$1,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venue Rental- Wright Center</td>
<td>Kenyon College Wright Center for Community Partnerships- Digital Storytelling Showcase</td>
<td>Partner</td>
<td></td>
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<td>$390</td>
<td>$390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker Fees</td>
<td>Clara Roman-Ocido, &quot;Latinos in Rural America&quot; talk and presentation (pending)</td>
<td>NEA Grant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$1,000</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internship- Kenyon College</td>
<td>Kenyon College - Community Internship Program (Pending)</td>
<td>Partner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$840</td>
<td>$840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Giveaway- Limon</td>
<td>30 free copies of The Carrying (Ada Limon) for Poetry Workshop participants</td>
<td>NEA Grant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$396</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venue Rental- Wright Center Classroom</td>
<td>Kenyon College- Classroom rental for Digital Storytelling project</td>
<td>Partner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$1,200</td>
<td>$1,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion</td>
<td>Detail costs associated with advertising and promoting your NEA Big Read.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>56 PSA's on local commercial and public radio stations, print &amp; online newspaper ads</td>
<td>NEA Grant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$2,056</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flyers, Posters, brochures</td>
<td>In-house production and graphic design, print costs only</td>
<td>Applicant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$1,000</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$19,714</td>
<td>$26,951</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

(a) PLMKVC recently entered into an agreement with Kenyon College Office of Internships and the Knox County Foundation, through which Knox County Foundation covers salary costs for two interns each spring semester. We anticipate continuing that relationship in 2022, and plan to dedicate one intern to coordinating and implementing "Big Read" events.  
(b)Staff hourly costs include fringes, which vary significantly based on employee health insurance election/family size/etcetera.