NEA Big Read Grant 2020-2021
Potential Program and Partner Information Sheet

**Deadline for Program Proposals:**
January 10, 2020

**Deadline for Grant Application:**
Late January, 2020
(deadline will be announced October 2019)

**Call for Partners and Programs:** NEA Big Read Grant feat. *The Round House* by Louise Erdrich

The Virginia G. Piper Center for Creative Writing at Arizona State University is seeking to partner with individuals or organizations who are interested in developing and implementing artistic, literary, or cultural events and programs based on *The Round House*, a novel by author Louise Erdrich, as part of an application for the NEA’s Big Read program, with central programming to be executed in and around March 2021.

Each partner will support their own program or programming components out of their internal budgets and operations, and will receive increased promotional support through both the Big Read program and the partnership’s outreach and marketing efforts. No financial contributions are necessary, though would be welcome toward securing the headlining keynote event with Louise Erdrich. Copies of *The Round House* will be available to partners upon request. All programs must be open to the public. Brief descriptions of potential programs and biographies of any associated presenters can be emailed to Angie Dell [amzell@asu.edu](mailto:amzell@asu.edu) by Friday, January 10, 2020. The grant application is due in late January, 2020.

For more information, please view the NEA’s Big Read website and information sheet at [http://piper.asu.edu/big-read](http://piper.asu.edu/big-read)

This document is meant to provide basic but comprehensive information to individuals and organizations working in arts and culture, indigenous studies, tribal law, creative writing, library science, or related fields who may wish to create programs or events around Louise Erdrich’s *The Round House* as part of an application for an NEA Big Read Grant.

By seeking partners for this grant, we hope to help build an extensive network of interconnected conversations, events, and programs centered around the guiding themes of *The Round House*. 
What is the NEA Big Read?
“A program of the National Endowment for the Arts, NEA Big Read broadens our understanding of our world, our communities, and ourselves through the joy of sharing a good book.” (NEA Big Read)

Specifically, the NEA Big Read is a federal grant that aims to support diverse, imaginative literary programming around one of the pre-selected “Big Read” books towards engaging with and developing communities. The NEA Big Read grant offers a $5,000 to $15,000 cost share/match requiring one kick-off event, 10 book discussions, one keynote, and two special events in partnership with a public library and other community organizations with comprehensive promotion and organizational capacity to implement.

To learn more about the NEA Big Read, visit https://www.arts.gov/partnerships/nea-big-read.

Who is applying for the grant?
The Virginia G. Piper Center for Creative Writing is applying for the grant in partnership with many community partners and initiatives. You can find out more about the Piper Center by visiting piper.asu.edu.

Who can contribute a program or event?
Anybody. Individuals or organizations of all fields can contribute a program or serve as a partner on the grant regardless of non-profit status or ASU affiliation. Programs must be open to the public but do not need to be free.

Which book are you applying for?
The Round House is a novel by author Louise Erdrich that “tells the suspenseful tale of a 13-year-old boy's investigation and desire for revenge following a brutal attack on his mother that leaves his father, a tribal judge, helpless in his pursuit to bring the perpetrator to justice” (NEA Big Read). While the book is suitable for readers of most ages—possibly middle grade, young adult and up—please be advised that content is mature.

What is the book about?
A work of literary fiction, The Round House takes the classic Bildungsroman / coming-of-age story and blends it with elements of memoir, detective novels, suspense, and storytelling / oral history. While the primary theme in the novel is justice through the lens of indigenous history and tribal law, the book also explores family, sexuality, relationships, and religion. For more information about The Round House, visit https://www.arts.gov/partnerships/nea-big-read/the-round-house.
Who is Louise Erdrich?
“Louise Erdrich is the author of fifteen novels as well as volumes of poetry, children’s books, short stories, and a memoir of early motherhood. Her novel *The Round House* won the National Book Award for Fiction. *The Plague of Doves* won the Anisfield-Wolf Book Award and was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize, and her debut novel, *Love Medicine*, was the winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award. Erdrich has received the Library of Congress Prize in American Fiction, the prestigious PEN/Saul Bellow Award for Achievement in American Fiction, and the Dayton Literary Peace Prize. She lives in Minnesota with her daughters and is the owner of Birchbark Books, a small independent bookstore.” (HarperCollins)

What are the plans so far?
We are trying to plan and develop innovative literary events and programs exploring themes in Louise Erdrich’s *The Round House* around the community.

Programming would ideally take place in and around March 2021. We hope this timing will support connections with and lead into powwow seasons throughout Arizona, and will also build momentum and activism surrounding the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women on May 5th.

Some of our initial ideas and programs include:

- Presenting multiple readings from indigenous writers throughout Arizona as part of a series of kickoff events in Fall 2020, possibly in connection with November’s National Native American Heritage Month
- Coordinating discussion groups and book clubs in classrooms and community spaces
- Presenting talks, panels, and other educational programs on tribal law, race, social justice, indigenous studies, literature, and other themes of the book (with a focus on Arizona)
- Leading writing workshops and exercises for community members, writers, and youth
- Bringing in Louise Erdrich and/or another speaker or speakers to discuss the themes of the book.

Why are you doing this?
For years, the Piper Center has been presenting nationally and internationally recognized authors as part of its Distinguished Visiting Writer Series at ASU. The NEA Big Read presents opportunities for increasing the visibility and promotion of literature in metropolitan Phoenix and the state of Arizona and, more importantly, enables the center to develop deeper relationships with communities that have been historically under-represented or under-served.

Our vision is to produce thematically cohesive, state-wide arts and culture programming that promotes creative writing and produces a deeper, more nuanced understanding of indigenous
culture in modern society. We’re interested in the idea of history; the intersection of individual stories with larger political, social, and historical narratives; facilitating deeper relationships between indigenous and non-indigenous writers and individuals in our communities; creating conversations between the young and the old, the emerging and the established, and the contemporary and the traditional.

**Why should I do this?**
Beyond raising the profile of your respective organization through participation in a prestigious federal grant and the national marketing that comes with it, leading to increased participation in respective programs and/or development efforts, participation in the Grant creates strong professional connections, lays the groundwork for future partnerships and/or large-scale state-wide initiatives and programming, and helps develop a more cohesive arts and culture field.

More importantly, the Grant provides the opportunity to use arts and culture to advance a cause and social issue—to move beyond the sphere of discourse and meaning and into the realm of practice, action, and difference.

**What kinds of events or programs are you looking for?**
Anything that explores or engages with the themes of the book. Examples include: teaching the book in your class; reading the book in your book club; hosting a discussion group in the community; talks, presentations, lectures, panels, q&a’s, or other educational programs on creative writing, literature, indigenous studies, social justice, critical race theory, or other areas relevant to the book; writing groups and workshops; storytelling performances; plays or staged readings; visual art; music performances; dance; etc.

All of that being said, we are more interested in what you or your organization are already doing, what your goals are, and how you or your organization can shape or direct existing programs to participate in and increase the effectiveness of this large-scale partnership.

**Do I need to make a monetary contribution in order to contribute a potential event or program?**
No. While financial contributions are appreciated, the Piper Center and other key partners are supporting the costs of the major programs and marketing using existing budgets and the NEA Grant. Each partner is expected to pay for and support their own programs.

**When would programs take place?**
In and around March 2021, to centralize and promote the programming as part of an interconnected series. There may also be kick-off events taking place in Fall 2020.
Where would programs take place?
Programs would take place across the Phoenix Metropolitan area and throughout Arizona at locations secured by each partner. That being said, the Piper Center may be able to provide assistance or support to individuals or organizations who do not have a concrete location and/or may need a venue.

What do you need from me if I’m interested in contributing a program or partnering?
The Piper Center will need:

• a 3 to 5 sentence description of your potential program and intended impact
• a preliminary commitment from any speakers or service providers
• any financial contributions (if applicable)
• a brief biography of your organization’s appropriate contact or staff member

When do you need the description?
Email descriptions to Angie Dell by Friday, January 10, 2020. Individuals and organizations who submit proposals should expect a response within the week.

Can I still contribute an event or program if I miss the deadline?
Yes. Grants will be announced in late April of 2020—if the Piper Center is selected, we will make an announcement to the community in early May to begin planning. That being said, making a commitment to present an event or program now strengthens the application and increases our chances of receiving the grant.

What is your general timeline?
Interested parties and potential partners should be thinking about and developing potential programs between now and the end of the year, obtaining any preliminary commitments from any speakers or service providers, and writing up their proposals to submit by January 10th, 2020. The Piper Center will use this information to apply for the grant by late January 2020 (the NEA will announce the specific deadline for this in November 2019.) Grant recipients will be notified in late April of 2020. If the Piper Center is selected, a partnership planning meeting will be scheduled in mid-May 2020. Most of the programming will take place in and around March 2021.

Can I see your budget?
Of course. The budget will be finalized in early January 2020 and will be made available to all interested parties or potential partners upon request. If you have any questions in the meantime, please contact Angie Dell, who is managing and writing the grant application.

What happens if you don’t get the grant?
The Piper Center will maintain progress with interested partnerships to move forward with programming on a smaller scale, and will likely reapply for the grant next fiscal year.