



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Katie McCullough, Marketing Manager

katie@arts-inspiredlearning.org | 216.561.5005 ext. 13

Megan Thompson, Special Projects Manager

megan@arts-inspiredlearning.org | 216.561.5005 ext. 15

CENTER FOR ARTS-INSPIRED LEARNING IS ONE OF 79 ORGANIZATIONS NATIONWIDE TO RECEIVE AN NEA BIG READ GRANT FOR 2018-'19

Celebration of *Citizen: An American Lyric* by Claudia Rankine expands to include all of Cuyahoga County

(Cleveland, OH—June 5, 2018) For the second consecutive year, Center for Arts-Inspired Learning (CAL) has been selected as one of 79 nonprofit organizations to host a NEA Big Read program. A grant award of \$15,000 for the 2018-'19 program year, combined with expanded community partnerships and programming options, will give residents throughout Cuyahoga County the chance to participate in Cleveland's NEA Big Read celebration of Claudia Rankine's *Citizen: An American Lyric*. Programming will take place during the month of February 2019.

"We are excited for the opportunity to grow our audience to include not only the city of Cleveland - but all of Cuyahoga County - in our NEA Big Read celebration," said CAL Executive Director Marsha Dobrzynski. "Thanks to our growing list of community partners, this year's read is truly a BIG read. It is our hope that residents throughout the county will engage with *Citizen* and find meaningful connections to their daily lives."

An initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with Arts Midwest, the NEA Big Read broadens our understanding of our world, our communities, and ourselves through the joy of sharing a good book. The NEA Big Read showcases a diverse range of contemporary titles that reflect many different voices and perspectives, aiming to inspire conversation and discovery. In choosing *Citizen* as the book selection for its community read, CAL intends to facilitate healthy, respectful, and potentially uncomfortable dialogue with the goal of encouraging self-reflection while helping break down negative racial stereotypes and exposing their impact on the local community.

"The National Endowment for the Arts is proud to support opportunities for communities across the nation, both small and large, to take part in the NEA Big Read," said NEA Acting Chairman Mary Anne Carter. "This program encourages people to not only discuss a book together, but be introduced to new perspectives, discuss the issues at the forefront of our own lives, and connect with one another at events."

The 2019 NEA Big Read in Cleveland is presented in partnership with Cleveland Cinemas, Cleveland Public Library, Cuyahoga County Public Library, Euclid Public Library, Heights Libraries, Lake Erie Ink, Literary Cleveland, Music and Art at Trinity Cathedral, Rocky River Public Library, Shaker Heights Public Library, and the United Black Fund of Greater Cleveland. Program events will include book discussions, movie screenings, poetry and creative writing workshops, and a county-wide poetry slam presented by Lake Erie Ink.

Since 2006, the National Endowment for the Arts has funded more than 1,400 NEA Big Read programs, providing more than \$19 million to organizations nationwide. In addition, Big Read activities have reached every Congressional district in the country. Over the past eleven years, grantees have leveraged more than \$44 million in local funding to support their NEA Big Read programs. More than 4.9 million Americans have attended an NEA Big Read event, approximately 82,000 volunteers have participated at the local level, and 39,000 community organizations have partnered to make NEA Big Read activities possible. For more information about the NEA Big Read, please visit arts.gov/neabigread.

For more information on the 2019 Big Read in Cleveland or to learn about becoming a community partner, please contact CAL's Special Projects Manager Megan Thompson at megan@arts-inspiredlearning.org. For a calendar of events for the NEA Big Read in Cleveland visit arts-inspiredlearning.org/NEABigRead2019.

Community members can also participate in Cleveland's NEA Big Read via social media by following #BigReadCLE and #CitizenCLE or joining the conversation @CenterforArtsInspiredLearning on Facebook and @artsinspiredCAL on Twitter.

The Center for Arts-Inspired Learning ignites student learning, creativity, and success through the arts. One of the largest of 32 affiliates in the national Young Audiences Arts for Learning network, the Center for Arts-Inspired Learning works with more than 80 professional teaching artists to bring innovative, arts-integrated learning experiences to Northeast Ohio students in grades Pre-K-12. Reaching nearly 206,000 children annually, CAL's arts education programs, workshops, and residencies close learning gaps, teach creative thinking and problem solving, and help students succeed in school, in their first jobs, and beyond. Learn more at www.arts-inspiredlearning.org

Established by Congress in 1965, the National Endowment for the Arts is the independent federal agency whose funding and support gives Americans the opportunity to participate in the arts, exercise their imaginations, and develop their creative capacities. Through partnerships with state arts agencies, local leaders, other federal agencies, and the philanthropic sector, the NEA supports arts learning, affirms and celebrates America's rich and diverse cultural heritage, and extends its work to promote equal access to the arts in every community across America. Visit arts.gov to learn more about NEA.

Arts Midwest promotes creativity, nurtures cultural leadership, and engages people in meaningful arts experiences, bringing vitality to Midwest communities and enriching people's lives. Based in Minneapolis, Arts Midwest connects the arts to audiences throughout the nine-state region of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. One of six non-profit regional arts organizations in the United States, Arts Midwest's history spans more than 25 years. For more information, please visit artsmidwest.org.

#