

Troy University Rosa Parks Library

Montgomery, AL

Grant request: \$15,000

Book selection: *Citizen: An American Lyric*

Financial information:

Previous fiscal year expenses: \$233,902,051

Current fiscal year expenses: \$236,160,343

Project information:

Proposed programming start date: 03-01-2020

Proposed programming end date: 05-01-2020

Number of partner organizations: 9

Number of book discussions: 15

Total number of events: 24

Anticipated total participants: 10,000

Please describe your community you plan to reach.

The city of Montgomery, Alabama played an important part of the American civil rights movement with the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Selma to Montgomery March. Montgomery is now a tourist destination for those on the “civil rights trail.” Troy University Rosa Parks Library is located in downtown Montgomery, Alabama on the spot where Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a bus. Montgomery is the second largest city in the state of Alabama. According to the 2010 census, the city of Montgomery had a population of over 205,000 people and the U.S. census estimate as of July 2017 is 226,646. The Montgomery metro “River Region,” has over 370,000. The city population is 56.6% African American, 37.3 Caucasian, 3.9 % Hispanic and 2.2% Other. During the 2019/2020 NEA Big Read, we plan to reach out to public high school students, including “at-risk” students, youth organizations, Montgomery City-County Public Library users, college & community college students, and the general public.

Why did you choose this book for this community?

Crime and poverty are higher than ever and our public schools are some of the worst in the country. In 2017, according to the National Education Association, among all of the states in the U.S., Alabama came in last (#50) when it came to number of high school graduates. In 2016, Alabama had the nation’s third highest homicide rate, according to statistics released by the FBI. Nearly 26,000 violent crimes were reported in the state with a population of only 4.9 million people. It is long overdue for Montgomery and the surrounding River Region to read *Citizen: An American Lyric* by Claudia Rankine. The Troy University Rosa Parks Library chose *Citizen: An American Lyric*, because of the need for frank and open dialogue about race, racism and police violence in our community. The Troy University Rosa Parks Library is located at the site where Rosa Parks was arrested on the bus during the Montgomery Bus Boycott, yet how far have we really progressed in a supposedly “post-racial” America?

What are your intended outcomes for this project?

For the 2016/2017 NEA Big Read, the Troy University Rosa Parks Library successfully partnered with the Rosa Parks Museum, Trenholm State Community College and the Alabama Book Festival. Because the previous NEA Big Read events were so well-attended in our community (over 10,000 people) we would like to continue working with these organizations during the 2019/2020 NEA Big Read. We would like to expand our relationship with the Montgomery City-County Public Library, involving all eleven branch libraries and to expand our relationship with local area high school students, involving more public schools and at-risk students. We are excited to add a new partner That's My Child, a youth mentoring organization that promotes reading. We plan to reach large numbers of the general public by including not just the Rosa Parks Museum, but also hope to involve other museums in Montgomery such as the new Legacy Museum: From Lynching to Mass Incarceration, promoted by the Equal Justice Initiative.

Organization Description

Describe your organization's history, programming, and achievements.

Troy University began in 1887 at Troy Normal school in Troy, Alabama, with the mission of educating teachers in Alabama. The Troy University motto is "Educate the mind to think, the heart to feel, the body to act." Since that time, TROY has grown into a global university with four campuses in Alabama and 60 teaching sites in 17 U.S. States and 11 countries with a total enrollment of over 18,000 students. The Troy University Rosa Parks Library is located in downtown Montgomery, AL on the Troy University Montgomery Campus, approximately 50 miles from the TROY main campus. Many of the students and faculty on the Troy, AL campus live and work in the Montgomery metro area. In December 2000, the Troy University Montgomery Campus Library was renamed Troy University Rosa Parks Library and moved into the Rosa Parks Library & Museum Building. The mission of the Troy University Montgomery Campus is to serve non-traditional students, helping them obtain a better life through higher education. The average age of students on campus is 29. Enrollment for the Troy Montgomery Campus is around 2,000; however, the Troy University Rosa Parks Library serves the larger Montgomery tri-county area that reaches approximately 370,000 people. Over the last ten years, Troy University Libraries have received over \$100,000.00 in grant monies. The Troy University Rosa Parks Library has a history of being actively engaged in community programming for public audiences and has developed a core group of members of the community who regularly attend events such as film screenings, art exhibits, book discussions and scholarly lectures. Several of the more recent grants received by the Troy University Rosa Parks Library that have been very successful included a 2016 NEA Big Read grant, a Judith F. Krug Banned Books Week grant, and a Latino Americans: 500 years of history grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the American Library Association.

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

In 2016, Troy University Rosa Parks Library received a NEA Big Read grant of \$16,600 to read *Silver Sparrow* by Tayari Jones. Because of this experience, we have developed ongoing partnerships in the community and have an excellent team in place to help with this NEA Big Read. The 2016 NEA Big Read was a huge success in our community, reaching well over 10,000 people at the events that included talks by the author, an art exhibit and a community festival. This NEA Big Read impacted people of all ages and ethnicities, from readers in book groups at public libraries to people in hair salons. Along the way we picked up unexpected partners (not originally included in the grant). One of these partners was Carver Public High School. It was very rewarding to work with the youth at this school. Two of the most uplifting comments from the 2016 NEA Big Read that illustrate the impact we had on the community, came from two young girls who wrote about seeing the art exhibit *Her Word as Witness: Women Writers of the African Diaspora* by Laylah Barrayn at the Rosa Parks Museum. One girl wrote: "We went from segregation to this in less than 1 century. It is beautiful." The other girl said "these photographs of inspiring women are very empowering and they give me confidence that I will achieve amazing things." It is because of the overwhelming success of our last NEA Big Read that the Troy University Rosa Parks Library would like to host another NEA Big Read in 2020. Troy University Rosa Parks Library is looking forward to the next NEA Big Read coming to Montgomery, Alabama as an opportunity for the library to reach out to the community to promote reading and literacy, especially among high school students. We would like to provide students and opportunity to express themselves through artwork and poems related to themes in *Citizen: An American Lyric* and have their work on display for others to see and hear.

Programming Description

Describe your programming plans in detail. Provide details on the types of activities, target audiences for those activities, locations, and intended dates. Explain how your activities will engage audiences with your selected book.

KICKOFF EVENT: Opening night of the Art Exhibit and Keynote Address. **LOCATION:** Rosa Parks Museum **TIMEFRAME:** March 2020. **DESCRIPTION:** Free art exhibit, a reception, book giveaway and keynote speaker discussing the works of Claudia Rankine including *Citizen: An American Lyric* **TARGET AUDIENCE/ENGAGEMENT:** Sets a framework for reading and discussing the work. Targets all of our partners* and the general public.

ART EXHIBIT: In Black & White - *Citizen: An American Lyric* **LOCATION:** Rosa Parks Museum **TIMEFRAME:** Mar/Apr 2020 (One month.) **DESCRIPTION:** Exhibit of artwork by Montgomery area students regarding their interpretations of what it means to be a citizen. **TARGET AUDIENCE/ENGAGEMENT:** The general public, partner organizations, and visitors to the Rosa Parks Museum. The exhibit engages local area students to have their artwork exhibited at the museum.

READ WITH ROSA: **LOCATION:** Rosa Parks Museum **TIMEFRAME:** Mar/Apr 2020; **DESCRIPTION:** Read *Citizen: An American Lyric* with Rosa Parks; **TARGET AUDIENCE/ENGAGEMENT:** general public, high school and college students, Rosa Parks Library users, partners* Community Leaders and the general public are welcome to come by the museum and read *Citizen* next to Rosa Parks. This event is meant to generate more publicity about the upcoming events and give away free copies of the book.

THEATRICAL PERFORMANCE: Micro-aggressions in *Citizen: An American Lyric*. **LOCATION:** Rosa Parks Museum **TIMEFRAME:** Mar/Apr 2020 **DESCRIPTION:** Reenactment of micro-aggressions in the book *Citizen: An American Lyric*. **TARGET AUDIENCE/ENGAGEMENT:** high school & college students, general public, partners* The performance engages local area high school and college students who have been reading the book and attracts interest from the general public.

PANEL DISCUSSION: *The Criminal Justice System Then and Now: From the Scottsboro Boys to the Equal Justice Initiative*. **LOCATION:** The Legacy Museum **TIMEFRAME:** Mar/Apr 2020; **DESCRIPTION:** Lecture and book discussion about injustice in the criminal justice system – past and present. **TARGET AUDIENCE/ENGAGEMENT:** high school & college students, general public, other partners*

FILM SCREENING: Documentary film “13th” . **LOCATION:** Rosa Parks Museum **TIMEFRAME:** Mar/Apr 2020; **DESCRIPTION:** Film Screening and book discussion about African-Americans, mass incarceration and police violence in the U.S. **TARGET AUDIENCE/ENGAGEMENT:** high school & college students, general public, other partners*

FILM SCREENING: Movie “Remember the Titans” with film clips from the documentary “Breaking the Huddle” **LOCATION:** Rosa Parks Museum **TIMEFRAME:** Mar/Apr 2020 **DESCRIPTION:** Both the movie and documentary are based on true stories about integration in high school and college (University of Alabama) football. **TARGET AUDIENCE/ENGAGEMENT:** high school & college students; general public; other partners*

FILM SCREENING: Documentary film “Dark Girls” and book discussion **LOCATION:** Trenholm Community College **TIMEFRAME:** Mar/Apr 2020 **DESCRIPTION:** Film screening & book discussion of identity and personal self-worth as it relates to skin color and hair. **TARGET AUDIENCE/ENGAGEMENT:** cosmetology students at Trenholm, college students & high school students; general public; other partners*

POETRY SLAM at the 2020 Alabama Book Festival **LOCATION:** Old Alabama Town **TIMEFRAME:** April 2020, **DESCRIPTION:** Students from local area schools and other readers of *Citizen: An American Lyric* participate in a poetry slam. **TARGET AUDIENCE/ENGAGEMENT:** festival attendees from the local area and all over the state of Alabama, and partners* to celebrate and promote National Poetry Month.

BOOK DISCUSSIONS at Montgomery City-County Public Libraries (11) **LOCATION:** Public library branches all over Montgomery County **TIMEFRAME:** Mar/Apr 2020; **DESCRIPTION:** There will be eleven book discussions of *Citizen: An American Lyric* at Montgomery City-County Public Library branches, located all over the Montgomery county area. **TARGET AUDIENCE/ENGAGEMENT:** general public, library users and partner organizations. Librarians will lead discussions & encourage participants to attend other NEA Big Read events as well as write poetry for poetry slam at the book festival.

BARBERSHOP BOOK REPORTS: **LOCATION:** Barbershops in the community **TIMEFRAME:** Mar/Apr 2020, **DESCRIPTION:** Youth in the community get a free haircut for writing a 1 page report about *Citizen*.

BOOK DISCUSSION **LOCATION:** Trenholm Community College Library **TIMEFRAME:** March/April 2020;

Applicant: Troy University Rosa Parks Library

DESCRIPTION: Book Discussion TARGET AUDIENCE/ENGAGEMENT: college students, library users, general public, partners* To engage English students by working on poems to read at the Alabama Book Festival.

BOOK DISCUSSION LOCATION: Carver Public High School TIMEFRAME: March/April 2020; DESCRIPTION: Book Discussion(s) TARGET AUDIENCE/ENGAGEMENT: high school students. To engage English students by working on poems to read at the Alabama Book Festival and art students by having their work on display at the Rosa Parks Museum. Some of these students are “at-risk” students in the PACE program.

BOOK DISCUSSION: Alabama Book Festival Student Readers Group LOCATION: Old Alabama Town & online TIMEFRAME: March/April 2020; DESCRIPTION: A two-month outreach program associated with the Alabama Book Festival. TARGET AUDIENCE/ENGAGEMENT: high school students. The purpose is to promote National Poetry Month among high school students. Students from all over the state will be encouraged to read Citizen: An American Lyric. Educational materials will be provided on Alabama Book Festival website. Partner organizations the Montgomery Area will be given free copies of the book to read, prior to the festival. Students will be encouraged to attend the festival and create their own poems, based on themes in the book and read them at the poetry slam.

*partners – Rosa Parks Museum, Montgomery Public Libraries, Montgomery Public Schools, Trenholm Community College, youth organizations

Partnerships Description

(a) Describe your partnerships with libraries (as applicable) and community organizations. (b) 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. (c) Explain how your partnerships will allow you to reach your intended audience(s) and strengthen or build new communities around the NEA Big Read activities.

The Troy University Rosa Parks Library partners (confirmed) include the Rosa Parks Museum, Montgomery City-County Public Library system, Carver Public High School, That's My Child, Trenholm State Community College, and the Alabama Book Festival. Working alongside these partners, Troy University departments including English, Sociology, Psychology, and Theatre & Dance will host a series of events in March and April of 2020. All partners will work together to promote NEA Big Read events and participate in the reading and discussion of *Citizen: An American Lyric*.

THE ROSA PARKS MUSEUM (confirmed-see letter) The Rosa Parks Museum is located on the Troy University Montgomery Campus in downtown Montgomery. The museum includes a permanent exhibit, a temporary exhibit space, and an auditorium and conference room. Over 20,000 people visit the Rosa Parks Museum every year, coming from the Montgomery area, the state of Alabama, and countries all over the world. The Rosa Parks Museum partnered with the Rosa Parks Library for the 2016 NEA Big Read. For the 2020 Big Read, the museum will provide staff and promote events, host the art exhibit, a film screening, and a Read with Rosa and theatrical event.

MONTGOMERY CITY-COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM (confirmed- letter) The Montgomery City-County Public Library system worked with the Troy University Rosa Parks Library during the 2016 NEA Big Read. Eleven branches of the public library will host book discussion groups, provide staff for events and promote the NEA Big Read events with library users and the local community.

MONTGOMERY PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS (confirmed) Carver Public High School worked with the Troy University Rosa Parks Library during the 2016 NEA Big Read. We plan to have additional high schools participate in the 2020 NEA Big Read. Students in English and Art classes will read the book and participate in events.

THAT'S MY CHILD (confirmed) will oversee the Barbershop Book Club

TRENHOLM STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE (confirmed/previous Big Read partner) Trenholm State Community College is part of the Alabama Community College System and member of Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Trenholm has two campuses in Montgomery. Trenholm will hold a book discussion group, a film screening and host a NEA Big Read speaker.

ALABAMA BOOK FESTIVAL (confirmed/previous Big Read partner) The annual festival is a free “high profile” event, publicized throughout the state of Alabama. Last year over 3,000 people attended the 14th annual Alabama Book Festival. Every year, the Alabama Book Festival is held on a Saturday in April in “Old Alabama Town” in downtown Montgomery. The festival includes authors who read, discuss and sign copies their book(s). Prior to the festival, the Alabama Book Festival Student Reader Outreach group for students in grades 9-12 will read *Citizen: An American Lyric*. The day of the festival a poetry jam will be a time for students to read their own poems inspired by *Citizen: An American Lyric*. A NEA Big Read booth will be set up at the festival.

TROY UNIVERSITY THEATRE & DANCE DEPARTMENT (pending) Students in the Troy University Theatre & Dance Department will create a performance acting out micro-aggressions in *Citizen: An American Lyric*.

TROY UNIVERSITY ART DEPARTMENT (pending/previous partner) Students in the Troy University art department designed the 2016/2017 NEA Big Read t-shirt and will design the 2019/2020 t-shirt. We plan for them to work with public high school students to create the Rosa Parks Museum art exhibit.

EQUAL JUSTICE INITIATIVE/THE LEGACY MUSEUM (pending) The Legacy Museum: From Lynching to Mass Incarceration is a new museum supported by the Equal Justice Initiative that opened in April of 2018 in Montgomery, Alabama. Although they are not an official partner with us, The Equal Justice Initiative Community Education Department Coordinator requested that we contact her again once we receive the NEA Big Read to discuss possible speakers and events.

Promotional Description

(a) Describe how you will promote your programming. Discuss any proposed or existing partnerships with specific media outlets. (b) Explain how your program will utilize the PDF digital resources found on arts.gov and distribute copies of your reading selection.

As we did with the 2016 NEA Big Read, Troy University will send out a press release when Troy University receives notification of the NEA Big Read grant and place the news on the Troy University website. Articles about the NEA Big Read, its purpose, and planned events in the community of Montgomery will be sent to Troy University's student newspaper, The Tropolitan and to The Montgomery Advertiser. When it gets closer to the NEA Big Read kickoff date, the newspapers will be contacted again and given specific event dates and times. Troy University Public Radio and the Troy University TV station will publicize the NEA Big Read and its events. Troy University photographers will take photos. The radio station will interview event speakers and these interview will air on one of the station's programs. The NEA Big Read will also be promoted on local TV stations such as WSFA in Montgomery AL. Social media at Troy University such as Facebook and Twitter will be used to post information about NEA Big Read events. Events will be listed on the Troy University Montgomery and the Troy University Libraries Facebook page. Campus-wide emails will be sent in the weeks before events. Copies of Citizen: An American Lyric, t-shirts and other promotional materials will be given to the general public attending NEA Big Read events, to teachers of classes discussing the book, and to our partner organizations. Posters, flyers and bookmarks will be created and available at all of our NEA Big Read partner organizations, at Troy University, and in the community at the Chamber of Commerce and local businesses. Our partners will cross-promote. The Rosa Parks Museum, Montgomery City-County Public Libraries and Old Alabama Town (hosting the Alabama Book Festival) all have good regular working relationships with local media. The Alabama Book Festival is promoted by the local newspaper and local news media and the event is listed in local magazines and Alabama tourism pamphlets.

Organizer Biographies

Outline the key individuals and/or volunteers who will plan and implement the programming, noting their anticipated roles and responsibilities in your proposed programs, and experience or capacity for managing a NEA Big Read. Include partner organizations' staff as applicable.

TROY UNIVERSITY Alyssa Martin, Instruction/Reference Librarian at the Rosa Parks Library, will oversee the 2019/2020 NEA Big Read. She was responsible for event programming and day-to-day operation of the \$16,600.00 NEA Big Read grant received by the library in 2016. Dr. Shaffer, Dean of Troy University Libraries, will oversee the grant budget. He served in this role for the 2016 NEA Big Read. Dr. Curnutt, Chair of Communication and Fine Arts, Professor of English, and the past Director of the Alabama Book Festival, selects authors for the festival. Dr. Everhardt, Assistant Professor of Sociology and Dr. Doss, Assistant Professor of Psychology, will participate on a panel discussion. Ms Averett, Assistant Professor of Theatre & Dance, will coordinate a theatre production. ROSA PARKS MUSEUM Dr. Bell, Director of the Rosa Parks Museum, will oversee the art exhibit at the museum and handle media and promotion. Donna Beisel, K-12 Education Coordinator, will work with local high school art students on the exhibit. CARVER PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL Ms Rockette-Rogers, English teacher at the school, will hold book discussions and Ms Price, art teacher, will work with students to create an art exhibit for the Rosa Parks Museum. THAT'S MY CHILD Mr. Peterson, Program Director, will oversee the Barbershop Book Club MONTGOMERY CITY-COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY Ms Preuss, Associate Director of the Montgomery City-County Library, will oversee book discussions at all 11 branches of the public library and handle media and promotion. ALABAMA BOOK FESTIVAL Ms Bradley, Marketing Director for Old Alabama Town and 2019 Director of the Alabama Book Festival, will promote and oversee events at the festival. TRENHOLM STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE Ms Smith, Reference/Information Literacy Librarian will coordinate and promote events and hold book discussions. EQUAL JUSTICE INITIATIVE/The Legacy Museum Ms Boone, Deputy Director of Community Education, requested we discuss speakers once we receive the grant.



2004 Gold Star Award Recipient



Library Administration
PO Box 1950
245 High Street
Montgomery, AL 36102-1950

Public Library Division
Alabama Library Association

Juliette H. Morgan Memorial Library
E.L. Lowder Branch Library
Governor Square Branch Library
Coliseum Branch Library
Pine Level Branch Library

Ramer Branch Library
Rosa Parks Branch Library
Rufus A. Lewis Branch Library
Pike Road Community Branch Library
Pintlala Branch Library

November 6, 2018

To whom it may concern,

The Montgomery City-County Public Library and the Troy University Rosa Parks Library have a history of working together to promote literacy in the Montgomery, Alabama community. For the 2015/2016 NEA Big Read, coordinated by the Troy University Rosa Parks Library, ten branches of Montgomery City-County Public Library enthusiastically read and discussed *Silver Sparrow* by Tayari Jones.

For the 2019/2020 NEA Big Read, the Montgomery City-County Public Library is very excited at the prospect of reading and discussing *Citizen: An American Lyric* by Claudia Rankine. It is long overdue for the Montgomery community to have a frank and open conversation about race, racism, police violence and other issues discussed in the book.

As a partner with Troy University Rosa Parks Library, Montgomery City-County Public Library plans to participate in community programming centered around issues in *Citizen: An American Lyric*, holding discussions of the book at eleven book clubs in ten branches of the library system, located all over Montgomery County. We plan to use our resources and contacts to assist in promoting the NEA Big Read throughout the Montgomery area.

We are looking forward to another NEA Big Read!!!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Karen Preuss'.

Karen Preuss
Assistant Library Director

Rosa Parks Museum

P.O. Drawer 4419
Montgomery, Alabama
36103-4419

334-241-8615
troy.edu/rosaparks

December 11, 2018

To whom it may concern,

The Rosa Parks Museum is excited to collaborate with Troy University's Rosa Parks Library and provide support for the River Region community to read *Citizen: An American Lyric* by Claudia Rankine for the 2019/2020 NEA Big Read grant. Past grant-funded partnerships with the Rosa Parks Library have included hosting and promoting the photographic exhibition, "Her Word as Witness" by Laylah Barrayn, which highlighted the beauty and achievements of African American women.

As a supportive partner to the Library for 2019/2020 NEA Big Read grant, the Rosa Parks Museum plans to host an art exhibition in our Community Gallery that will feature the artwork of local public high school students based on themes in Rankine's book. The Rosa Parks Museum's K-12 Education Coordinator, Donna Beisel, will assist Alyssa Martin, Instruction/Reference Librarian, and her staff as they work with the students and teachers to coordinate the exhibition.

Thank you for providing this funding opportunity. We are looking forward to sharing the lessons from this important book with our community! If you have any questions or need any additional information, feel free to contact me at (334) 241-8608 or via email at fbell@troy.edu.

Sincerely,



Felicia A. Bell, Ph. D.
Director

TROY
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ROSA PARKS
MUSEUM
TROY UNIVERSITY

