A Book Club for a Nation, Built Chapter by Chapter

FINAL REPORT

THE BIG READ

January 2007–July 2008

Submitted to the
National Endowment for the Arts
1100 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20506

by
Rockman et al
3925 Hagan Street, Suite 301
Bloomington, IN 47401

49 Geary Street, Suite 530
San Francisco, CA 94108

A Book Club for a Nation, Built Chapter by Chapter

FINAL REPORT

THE BIG READ

January 2007–July 2008

Kay Sloan
Michelle Honeyford
Kristin Bass

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the many people who have contributed to this report and to our study of The Big Read. Our sincerest thanks go to Sunil Iyengar, Tom Bradshaw, and Sarah Sullivan of the NEA's Office of Research and Analysis, who gave us wise and steady guidance throughout the study. It has been a pleasure to work with them, and with others at the Arts Endowment and the Institute of Museum and Library Services whose love of reading, and desire to inspire it in others, created this important initiative. Special thanks go to Susan Chandler, Christine Taylor, and their staff at Arts Midwest, who graciously answered our many questions and requests and helped us follow the activities of three Big Read cycles and over three hundred sites from proposal through final report.

We would also like to thank the grantees who helped us tell the story of The Big Read. They took part in surveys and interviews, and it was through their efforts that we heard from thousands of readers all over the country—attending events, reading The Big Read book with a class or book club, or filling out a post card slipped into a free book left in a coffee shop, bus, or waiting room.

The data collection was extensive, and we owe a special thanks to Justin Robertson and all those who helped us sort, code, and enter data; to John Hansen, who helped us analyze it; and to Jennifer Borland, Code Violet, and other staff members who helped us put the report together.

Finally, we would like to thank the grantees who served as our case study sites. In the midst of their busy Big Reads, they welcomed us to their communities, scheduled school visits and interviews, ferried us to events, and allowed us to share in the excitement of The Big Read.

Kay Sloan
Michelle Honeyford
Kristin Bass

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INDEX OF TABLES

INDEX OF FIGURES

A Book Club for a Nation, Built Chapter by Chapter

FINAL REPORT

THE BIG READ

January 2007–July 2008

"There are more readers out there than many people would believe."

Preface

This report shares the findings from a nineteen-month study of The Big Read, an initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts, in partnership with the Institute of Museum and Library Services and Arts Midwest, designed to restore reading to the center of American culture. Piloted in early 2006 and launched nationwide later that year, The Big Read brings communities together to read, discuss, and celebrate great literature. Libraries, museums, colleges and universities, municipalities, science and literary centers, arts and humanities councils, health and service agencies—all have received Big Read grants and joined forces with schools, businesses, and other local organizations to host community-wide reading events.

At the heart of these events is one novel, chosen from a growing list of books that began with some of the most enduring classics of modern American fiction—*Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury, *My Ántonia* by Willa Cather, *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald, *A Farewell to Arms* by Ernest Hemingway, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston, *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee, *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck, and *The Joy Luck Club* by Amy Tan—and expanded to include more genres and more diversity, with titles such as Rudolf Anaya's *Bless Me, Ultima*, Dashiell Hammet's *The Maltese Falcon*, and Ursula LeGuin's *The Wizard of Earthsea*.[1]

To date, over 500 communities in every state in the union, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands have received grants totaling over five million dollars, making The Big Read the largest federal literature program since the WPA.[2] This report is based on feedback from some 300 of those communities, gathered during the program's first year and a half.

[1] Recent partnerships with Russia, Egypt, and Mexico, have added titles from world literature, and, a partnership with The Poetry Foundation, the poems of Longfellow and Jeffers. See http://www.neabigread.org/ for a complete list of Big Read titles.

[2] A complete list of grantees is available at http://www.neabigread.org/.

The study was designed with two goals in mind. The first was to learn more about how communities hold a Big Read: what books they choose, what partners they enlist, what resources they use, and what promotional and programming strategies work best to attract audiences. This part of the study, which provided data to help improve and sustain the program, also looked at the factors that differentiate one Big Read from another and at those that characterize successful Big Reads.

The study was also designed to gauge the program's success in addressing the issue that brought it about in the first place: In 2004, the NEA published a landmark report entitled *Reading at Risk: A Survey of Literary Reading in America*, which documented declines in literary reading among all age groups, all ethnic groups, and all education levels.[3] In announcing The Big Read, NEA Chairman Dana Gioia said that it aimed "to address this issue directly, by providing citizens with the opportunity to read and discuss a single book within their communities."[4]

Gioia also likened The Big Read to a "national book club, with a chapter in every community," invoking another trend, in this case a positive one—the growing popularity of book clubs and community reading programs. A number of the communities selected to take part in The Big Read pilot had followed the lead of Seattle librarian Nancy Pearl, who in 1998 had launched "If All of Seattle Read the Same Book." So had of the communities who rallied to the NEA's call for proposals when The Big Read went national. The number of proposals submitted and the interest generated led the NEA, which had intended to award 50 grants in each of the first two six-month funding cycles, to double their numbers and award 72 grants in Phase 1, Cycle 1 and 117 in Phase 1, Cycle 2. They followed with another 128 awards in Phase 2, Cycle 1.[5]

Each cycle brought not only more grants to more communities but also increased efforts to reach a broader audience. When preliminary findings from this study showed that Big Read participants tended to be older, avid readers, and that females were attending events in higher numbers than males, program planners encouraged new grantees to design promotion and programming to attract teens, especially teenage boys, young adults, lapsed or reluctant readers, those new to literature, and those new to the English language. This meant inviting not just English teachers but also art, history, literacy, and theater faculties to incorporate The Big Read in their classrooms, and seeking out venues where teens congregate. Changes in the program were also reflected in the kinds of organizations applying for grants and joining as partners. The most frequent grantees across all cycles were libraries—not surprisingly, since, as Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) Director Radice noted, they are "places where communities come together to learn…where all kinds of community organizations—schools, museums, media,

[3] The National Endowment for the Arts, *Reading at Risk: A Study of Literary Reading in America*, Research Report #46, 2004. Available at http://www.nea.gov/pub/ReadingAtRisk.pdf.
[4] From the "Preface" to the Reader's Guides accompanying each Big Read novel. Other information and quotes about The Big Read come from a series of NEA press releases, available at: http://www.neabigread.org/pressreleases.php.
[5] At this writing, another 208 Big Read grants have been awarded.

business—can come together. And libraries have librarians—trained, committed people who know their communities, know about learning, and have the ability to bring partners to the table."[6] But as the program moved forward, service organizations, a scout troop, a science center, and even a medical center joined the museums, art and writing centers, colleges, cities, and tribal governments taking part in The Big Read.

During site visits and interviews with grantees and partners representing these organizations, and with many libraries, the study team often heard The Big Read compared to the WPA. Parsing those comments, as a prelude to more scientific measures and discussions of impact that follow in this report, points to The Big Read's success in its broad goal of bringing communities together to enjoy books, and suggests that the program has more in common with the WPA than zeroes on the end of the federal dollars. The comparison reflects how The Big Read makes communities feel. They are, in the words of one grantee, "part of something happening across the nation," and something widely recognized as good for the nation. Many grantees see the program as a model of how federal resources generate local support, build capacity, and give programs credence, bounce, and status. Grantees with previous federal or NEA grants, or libraries and museums familiar with IMLS's role in disbursing federal funds, applaud the new partnerships formed for The Big Read, as do those who benefited from Boeing's support of The Big Read on military bases, the Paul Allen Foundation's support for sites in the Pacific Northwest, or those who took advantage of the Kellogg Foundation's offer of matching grants to those who applied with their local community foundations.

Grantees also applaud the hands-on attention they received from Arts Midwest, one of six non-profit regional arts organizations that serve communities in multi-state areas, and the administrative agency for The Big Read. Arts Midwest is responsible for offering guidance to grantees on day-to-day implementation decisions and making sure they receive the NEA-produced promotional materials, including television and radio public service announcements, Reader's Guides, Teacher's Guides, and the Audio CDs for each book with commentary from renowned literary figures, actors, and educators. These resources, say grantees, add immeasurably to the dollars themselves, enabling them to go far beyond what they had successfully done in previous community reading programs—to do "what we normally do on a larger scale," and "what we do best, only better."

Alternating with pride in a national initiative and positive reception of federal sponsorship is a distinctly hometown pride. The Big Read makes communities feel good to be communities. Like the WPA, The Big Read is a grassroots effort every bit as much as it is a national effort. This populist feel is evident in ways grantees have added local branding to the NEA imprint. It also comes through in public events where food, music, and free books have become a widely used

[6] Anne-Imelda M. Radice, Remarks for The Big Read launch. See http://www.imls.gov/news/speeches/050906.shtm.

promotional strategy, along with the simple but effective approach of reaching people where they gather—at laundromats, beauty parlors, basketball games, supermarkets, and doctors' offices—or as they travel—on buses, trains, and tractors. The mark and value of community togetherness is apparent, too, in local programming. The books on The Big Read list are acknowledged classics with universal themes, but even as communities touch on those themes, they also make them local. In events based on *To Kill a Mockingbird*, an Odawa Indian tribe in Michigan compared the tribal ties between elders and children to those between Atticus, Jem, and Scout; inmates at an Illinois prison talked about representation by an attorney like Atticus. *Fahrenheit 451* prompted a public discussion of censorship in time of war, with panel members from the ACLU and the armed services; *A Farewell to Arms* inspired a discussion of war, healing, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Using *Their Eyes Were Watching God* and details of Zora Neale Hurston's anthropological work, storytellers and actors in San Diego, California, and Lafayette, Louisiana, tapped local folk tales, and a North Carolina professor discussed "the power of the porch."[7]

These events and discussions, say grantees, define who communities are and elevate the local dialogue about books. They also suggest that The Big Read's impact may reside in what it made possible and what it inspired citizens to consider, as much as in what communities or what citizens did during a single month. This report looks at both.

Overview of the Evaluation

In late 2006, the NEA, IMLS, and Arts Midwest contracted with Rockman et al, an independent research firm with offices in Bloomington, Indiana, and San Francisco, California, to conduct the national evaluation of The Big Read. As noted in the Preface, the goals of the evaluation were two-fold: 1) to provide data on implementation—on partnerships, promotion, programming, participation—that could help improve the program as it moved forward, and 2) to assess the program's impact on reading habits and its success in expanding the audience of those who read for pleasure and take part in activities related to literature.

The evaluation team discovered early on that what makes The Big Read a successful blend of grassroots and national efforts makes evaluating it a challenge. A Big Read implementation could look very different from site to site, and one of our biggest challenges was developing instruments and measures that were general enough to capture information across sites and allow us to aggregate data, but at the same time specific enough to capture the richness and variety of implementations and talk about improvement and effectiveness in a meaningful way.

[7] Trudier Harris, *The Power of the Porch: The Storyteller's Craft in Zora Neale Hurston, Gloria Naylor, and Randall Kenan (*Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996).

Another challenge was gathering sufficient data on key elements and gauging the representativeness of those data. Except in the case of book discussions and in-school events, Big Read audiences are not always captive audiences who can be asked to complete surveys: they are often gathered for open-air festivals or kick-off and closing events, seated in darkened auditoriums to listen to plays or view films, or simply going about, or taking a break from, daily routines as they listen to radio readings.

Asking participants about reading habits also edged into sensitive areas, and it was likely that non- or reluctant readers, or non-native speakers, might be less likely than avid readers to complete surveys and provide demographic data. Rockman deferred to grantees and partners hosting events to distribute feedback forms and steer participants to online surveys, and talked with grantees during site visits about who was attending events and who was completing forms. These conversations, grantees' accounts in final report narratives of their success in reaching audiences, their estimates of attendees in the tabular data, and their responses to our grantee online survey—all helped us understand The Big Read audience. Likewise, our participant responses, from event feedback and post cards and the online survey, provided valuable data on demographics and levels of participation. However, the task of saying with confidence which and how many citizens took part in The Big Read was not an exact science. It involved successive comparisons of data sets to determine how representative of the overall participant population each set was and best estimates of a profile of participation. (See Appendix B, p. 183, for responses by cycle, site, and instrument.)

To address these challenges, Rockman used a mixed-methods design with both quantitative and qualitative components. We collected data from grantees and participants, both during and after The Big Read, for the program's first three cycles, with some limitations. Data collection did not begin in earnest until the Office of Management and Budget granted approval for the study in April 2007, which limited responses from sites in the first cycle that held their Big Reads prior to that date. We also had to end third-cycle data collection in mid-August 2008, even though some sites had not yet returned participant surveys or completed final reports to Arts Midwest.

We also conducted case studies in all three cycles, those for the third cycle focusing on teens and young adults. Instruments were made available in paper an online, and in English and Spanish, as appropriate. Data collection activities were introduced to grantees at orientation sessions and during a teleconference sponsored by Arts Midwest, who also supported evaluation efforts by serving as a liaison to grantees and by providing proposals, final report narratives and financial reports, and other tabular data for our review. Guiding the study was a set of research questions reflecting the dual focus on implementation and impact:

- Who are The Big Read grantees, and how do they bring communities together?

- What partnerships are most productive, and do certain combinations of partnerships and programming lead to higher levels of participation? How do schools, teachers, students, military bases, and other community organizations take part?
- Who participates in The Big Read, and how do they hear about it? How does participation vary by age, ethnicity, gender, reading habits and preferences, community, or event type? What activities and events most successfully draw diverse audiences?
- Which NEA-produced Big Read resources proved the most helpful for organizers and participants? How do communities combine these resources with local promotion?
- What impact does The Big Read have on how organizations serve communities and build coalitions and partnerships? Has The Big Read cultivated bonds that can be leveraged for future initiatives?
- What impact does The Big Read have on participants? How effective is the program in changing attitudes and behaviors related to literary reading, including those of teens and young adults?
- To what extent or in what ways does The Big Read expand participation in arts and cultural activities related to literature?

Instruments used to gather feedback from Big Read grantees and participants included:

Event feedback cards and postcards. Grantees in the first two cycles (Phase 1) received 500 event feedback cards and 250 pre-paid post cards designed to gather background and demographic data on participants and tell us whom The Big Read was reaching. Grantees distributed event feedback cards at gatherings and circulated post cards in a variety of ways, slipping them into the pages of a Big Read book; leaving them at libraries, bookstores, museums, or cafes; or handing them out at Big Read events. Both types of cards were used to recruit participants for an online follow-up survey.

The participant survey. Accessible through The Big Read national Web site or from hyperlinks on grantees' local Big Read Web sites, the participant survey was the primary tool for learning how participants interacted with The Big Read. This survey also included a set of items taken from the Study of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA), the basis for the *Reading at Risk* report. In the third cycle (Phase 2), the survey was available on paper as well as online.

The participant follow-up survey. This survey helped further track changes in reading attitudes and habits. It was administered online or by telephone two to three months after participants completed their Big Read, to those who provided contact information on cards or on the participant survey. This survey also included the SPPA items.

The grantee online survey. Grantees were invited to complete a survey near the end of their programs. The survey included items about programming, promotion, the use and effectiveness of

The Big Read materials, the capacity-building outcomes for their organizations, and the effect of The Big Read on target audiences.

Case studies. Rockman conducted 36 case studies with volunteer sites or those selected in collaboration with Big Read partners, based on book choice, site demographics, institution type, and geographic region. Rockman interviewed 13 sites by phone and made 23 site visits, observing Big Read events and conducting interviews with community organizations and partners and focus groups with selected participants. Follow-up interviews with case-study grantees, conducted by phone two to three months after their Big Reads, allowed evaluators to collect further data about longer-term changes in patronage and circulation and literature-related events and partnerships. See p. 160 for complete list of case studies.

Proposals, final narrative reports and spreadsheets. In addition to reading a sample of proposals, Rockman reviewed other qualitative and quantitative data submitted to Arts Midwest as part of grant requirements. Rockman analyzed quantitative data submitted through eGrants to Arts Midwest to extract tabular information such as population size, number of events, partners, and in-kind contributions. In each cycle, we also reviewed a sample of grantees' final narrative reports, using qualitative analysis software to analyze over half of the narratives submitted during the second cycle. These data were used to triangulate other data sources and serve as indicators of effective implementation.

Table 1 below shows the numbers of sites, by cycle, included in data collection and instrument distribution. Table 72 on p. 155 shows response rates.

Table 1. Instrument Distribution and Data Collection

	Event and Postcards	Participant Survey	Participant Follow-up Survey	Grantee Survey	Case Studies	Arts Midwest Tabular Data	Arts Midwest Qualitative Data
Phase 1, Cycle 1	All sites	All sites (online)	All sites (online, by phone)	All sites (online)	14	All sites	Available Sample
Phase 1, Cycle 2	All sites	All sites (online)	All sites (online, by phone)	All sites (online)	9	All sites	Sample (n=67)
Phase 2, Cycle 1	X	All sites (online and on paper)	All sites (online, by phone)	All sites (online)	13	Available Sample	Sample (n=13, case study sites only)

Data Analysis. Rockman ran basic descriptives and frequencies for all survey data sets and examined correlations or relationships between variables where appropriate, looking, for example, to see if partnership variables were related to outcomes such as event attendance or success in attracting audiences. We also tabulated data in the Arts Midwest data sets. We conducted two comparative analyses: for grantees who held two Big Reads (typically in the first

and third cycles), we compared responses across data sets; for the SPPA items, we compared demographics and reading rates from the original study to those calculated for The Big Read study. For our qualitative data, including responses to open-ended questions and interview and focus group notes, we created a set of codes based on recurring themes that emerged in successive reviews. To handle the extensive set of final report narratives, we coded narratives by theme and used In-Vivo qualitative software for the analysis.

To link all these data sets, we assigned a unique five-digit code (based on codes Arts Midwest assigns to each grantee when they submit proposals) to each grantee site. This allowed us to link participant online survey responses and event feedback card and post card responses to sites. This uniform coding system, along with codes taken from or applied to the Arts Midwest tabular data (e.g., codes for institution type or population size) allowed us to analyze data across sets and archive these large and multiple data sets in such a way that the NEA could perform additional queries. The Methodology section of this report (Part Seven, p.151) provides further information on strategies, samples and response rates, and analyses.

Throughout the study, Rockman consulted regularly with the NEA's Office of Research and Analysis about these challenges and strategies to meet them. The staff assisted with our initial submission to the Office of Management and Budget[8] and discussed ways to collect reliable data consistent across local implementations and cycles, and then gauge the representativeness of our sample and generalizability of our findings. The Office of Research and Analysis was also very helpful in working with us to reconfigure data collection instruments and strategies to reflect the evolution and needs of the program, as in the case of the second phase of The Big Read, when we turned our focus to the program's impact on teens and young adults. The Office of Research and Analysis also invited the feedback of the NEA's Big Read team.

Rockman also worked closely with Arts Midwest, relying on their Big Read team for copies of grantees' proposals and final narrative reports and extensive tabular data from all three cycles, on such key elements of implementation as numbers of partners, events, attendees, and in-kind contributions, which, as described above, allowed us to link data sets and findings.

IMLS also provided valuable feedback on instruments and strategies, and especially in helping us understand the roles libraries and museums play in The Big Read. Their direction in a companion study of a distribution of The Big Red Audio Guides to public libraries across the country gave us additional insights into how libraries participate.

Organization of the Report

[8] OMB Control No. 3135-0121, expiration date 7/31/08.

The report, like the study, covers both the implementation of The Big Read and its impact on communities, participants, and literary reading. Our general approach in each section is to begin with the numbers, drawn from the Arts Midwest tabular data and our quantitative survey data, then follow with a discussion that weaves together case study data, responses to open-ended survey items, and our reviews of grantees' final narrative reports to Arts Midwest. We have used actual quotes from those narratives (set off in italics) or excerpts from our case studies (indicated by shaded inserts or sidebars) to put findings in context, further illustrate points, or report results not covered by quantitative data or that counter the quantitative data.[9] Findings are generally reported in aggregate, except where there were marked changes from cycle to cycle. An introduction to each part of the report reviews data sources; all tables also include sources and numbers of respondents included in the analyses.

Part One of the report shares implementation findings. It begins, in Section 1, with a description of the geographic range of sites receiving Big Read grants, the size of communities and types of institutions involved, and differences in funding, events, and attendance related to site-based factors. Section 1 describes the selection of Big Read titles; Section 3, partnerships—who local partners were, what roles they played, what led to successful partnerships; and Section Four, promotion, including grantees' use of NEA- and locally-created materials and resources.

Part Two looks at who is participating in The Big Read and includes demographic profiles as well as data on reading habits. It also examines how participants hear about The Big Read, and what programming and outreach efforts most successfully attracted particular audience groups.

Part Three of the report turns to impact. It begins with a discussion of the program's effect on organizations—on their capacity to undertake programs of this scope, on capacity to form local coalitions, and on communities as a whole. Part Four presents findings of The Big Read's impact on participants' reading rates and habits and on literary reading and public participation in the arts. Part Five takes a closer look at participation by teens and young adults and the program's impact on their reading interests and habits.

Each of the five parts of the report described above includes a brief discussion of samples and methodological issues and decisions, as well as a list of key findings. Part Six of the report provides overall Conclusions and Recommendations, and Part Seven goes into greater detail about the study's methodology. Appendices contain instruments and additional data tables.

[9] Full case-study reports are available upon request.

Part One

IMPLEMENTATION

Overview

The National Endowment for the Arts, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and Arts Midwest solicit and award Big Read grants in cycles. In the program's first year, or Phase 1, a total of 72 grants were awarded in Cycle 1 (P1C1) and 117 grants in Cycle 2 (P1C2). These cycles ran, respectively, from January through June and from September through December, 2007. In the first cycle of the program's second year, or Phase 2 (P2C1), from January through June 2008, 126 communities received grants, bringing the total for the program's first year and a half—the period covered in this study—to 315.

A cycle is set in motion with the announcement of a Request for Proposals (RFP) that outlines The Big Read goals and submission requirements. The RFP asks applicants to explain their local goals for their month-long programs,[10] their book choice, and their plans for creating and promoting events and reaching diverse audiences. Stressing the value of partnerships—modeled at the national level by the example of the NEA, IMLS, and Arts Midwest—the RFP encourages applicants to partner with schools, government agencies, arts and cultural centers, and other community organizations.

Awards are announced approximately one month before an Orientation session, which brings all of a cycle's grantees together to share ideas and learn more from the NEA, IMLS, and Arts Midwest about holding a Big Read. Training sessions cover topics such as working with the media and local officials and partners; understanding permissions and legal issues related to film screenings and reprinting texts and artwork; and reporting and evaluation requirements. At each session—and sometimes during cycles—grantees share strategies with each other, some of which, like the popular "What page are you on?" button created by a pilot site, become staples of implementation. At the Orientation, grantees are also introduced to The Big Read educational and programming resources—Reader's, Teacher's, and Organizer's Guides, Audio CDs, banners, bookmarks, posters, and the project Web site—and to NEA, IMLS, and Arts Midwest staff. These staff support grantees' efforts not only at the national level, but also by visiting local sites to deliver keynote addresses and by showing and generating support for The Big Read.

[10] In the first three cycles of The Big Read, grantees held their month-long programs any time during a six-month cycle. Evaluation feedback from grantees indicated that the time frame was tight—for hosting Big Reads in the earlier part of the cycle, for engaging schools and teachers whose curriculum is typically set months in advance, and for giving partners and participants time to read the book and put events on their calendars. To give grantees more lead-time and latitude, subsequent cycles extend over 12 rather than six months.

The first part of the report looks at the scope and variety in Big Read implementations, or how grantees take the federal funding and wealth of information shared at the orientation and give the national program a local identity. Certain program elements are set: The guidelines laid out in the application and Organizer's Guide urge grantees to involve all segments of the community. All grantees must include a kick-off event to launch their programs, a keynote address or panel, two to three other events such as film screenings or theatrical presentations, and, depending on their size, 10 to 50 book discussions. Guidelines encourage grantees to partner with middle and high schools to bring younger readers into the fold. Based on evaluation data from the first cycle indicating that participation skewed toward females and older, more avid readers, sites were encouraged to target lapsed and reluctant readers and males, especially teenage boys.

Sections include both quantitative and qualitative data—combining analyses of geographic distribution figures and funding and attendance ranges with narrative accounts from grantees' final reports and case-study interviews. Together, these methods provide macro-level perspectives of the national program and micro-level insights about unique implementations of local Big Reads. They also help us identify factors that distinguish one Big Read implementation from another—a big city's from a small town's, or a library's implementation from a performing arts center's—and what factors transcend local differences or remain unaltered by them.

Data Sources

The discussion is based on the data sources listed below. Because not all grantee reports were available at the writing of the report, and because respondents to surveys and survey questions varied, all tables include numbers for samples (N) and sub-samples (n).

Arts Midwest Database. The tabular data come from a database compiled by Arts Midwest from proposals and final reports submitted by grantees. We have population figures from all 315 sites participating in the first three cycles, since those data are provided in proposals. At writing of this report, not all third-cycle grantees had submitted their final reports, which include funding, event, and attendance figures, so they are not included here.[11] It should also be noted that grantees may compute totals differently. For example, what constitutes an in-kind contribution that can be converted to dollars may vary, and numbers of community members attending large-scale, open-air events like festivals or parades may be best estimates. Attendance figures may also be inflated because participants attend multiple events and may have been counted more than once. In the discussion, we have indicated instances where figures may be approximate.

[11] Approximately three-fourths of the 126 grantees in the third cycle, or Phase 2, Cycle 1, had submitted final report data at the writing of this report.

Grantee Narrative Reports. Detailed examples of grantee or partner activities and promotion or media coverage often came from grantees' final narrative reports, submitted to Arts Midwest along with tabular data at the end of their programs. Extended quotes appear in italics, and include institution, city, and state.

Grantee Surveys. Additional examples and ratings of programmatic activities and resources came from closed- and open-ended responses to the Grantee Survey. As Table 1 below shows, response rates varied. Lower rates in the first cycle are likely related to the fact that the evaluation began three months into the cycle; lower rates in the third cycle may be related to the evaluation's focus on teens and young adults and less contact with grantees as a whole.

Case Study Interviews, Visits, and Artifacts. Extended interviews with grantees from all three cycles provided more in-depth information on and further context for findings reported here.

The Methodology section provides further detail on responses and discusses the analyses performed for the different data sets (see p. 151).

Key Findings, Part One

- Since January 2007, when The Big Read was inaugurated nationwide, the program has expanded to all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Geographic distribution of the 315 sites hosting programs from January 2007 through June 2008 generally reflects the country's population density: 18.6% of the sites were in the Northeast, home to 19.0% of the population; in the Midwest, the percentages were 27.2 compared to 22.9; in the South, 34.0 compared to 35.6, and in the West, 20.2 compared to 22.5. The greatest concentrations of Big Read sites were in areas with medium to large populations (between 99,000 and 500,000).

- Based on figures reported to Arts Midwest at the time of this report, grantees had held almost 10,000 events and over 6,000 book club discussions. They reported event attendance figures over one million, and book discussion attendance at around 225,000. Attendance figures increased to some extent with population size, but only in the smallest populations was there a statistical correlation: small Big Read sites generally held fewer events than larger ones, for an average of 22 events per site. Numbers of events in sites with medium, large, and very large populations varied, averaging 33 events per site.

- Across the first three cycles, grant funds totaled $4,338,372, and matching funds, $9,925,667. Communities had the option of working with a local community foundation to apply to the national Community Foundations of America for matching Kellogg funds. The Paul Allen Foundation provided additional funding for five sites in the Pacific Northwest, and The Boeing Company provided financing for materials for participating military bases.

- Over the first three cycles, libraries received the most grants, with 152 or approximately half of those awarded. Other grantees included 54 higher education institutions, which ranged from large universities to small community colleges, and showed the greatest growth in awards from cycle to cycle. Grantee organizations also included 19 arts councils, 16 arts centers, 11 museums, and performing groups, writing centers, and media organizations. Participation by service agencies, municipal and tribal governments, and health care and science centers indicate that interest in literature and literacy is not limited to institutions whose mission is arts and literary reading. Overall, 36 institutions received repeat grants.

- The most frequently selected Big Read title was *To Kill a Mockingbird* (70), followed by *Fahrenheit 451* (58) and *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (37). *Bless Me, Ultima* (22) was a popular choice in sites committed to engaging Hispanic readers. Book selection, and the myriad local events, showed how the themes in these classics are both universal and local.

- Grantees considered partnerships critical to the success and sustainability of local Big Reads. Partners provided new audiences and venues, and expanded programming, promotion, and in-kind resources.

    - In the first three cycles, grantees partnered with 2,682 libraries, 4,445 schools, 10,304 teachers, 51 military bases, and an additional 3,000 community partners.

    - Averages by site and institution type indicate that between 9 and 14 partners are necessary to support a local Big Read. Additional correlation analyses suggested that there was an association, beyond what would be expected to occur simply by chance, between number of partners and capacity to attract audiences: those grantees with seven or more partners reported higher rates of success in attracting *diverse* audiences. Other qualitative data appeared to confirm this finding.

- Big Read funding and resources greatly expanded grantees' promotional efforts, with national branding complementing local efforts. Promotion came from media partners and unlikely sources such as utilities companies, firefighters, and ministers. One site that computed the value of in-kind promotion listed a total of over $200,000. Challenges included competition in media markets and a lack of local media outlets.

- The NEA-produced resources won consistently high praise, for their instructional and promotional value. Grantees reported that the Teacher's and Reader's Guides helped get schools and teachers on board. The public service announcements were praised for their production quality, and just over half of the survey respondents reported using them, some in tandem with promotional spots featuring local personalities. Feedback indicated that 30-second PSAs were an easier sell than 60-second ones.

SECTION 1: SITE CHARACTERISTICS AND SCOPE OF IMPLEMENTATION

What is the scope and range of The Big Read, and what factors link or differentiate sites?

This first section looks at the location of Big Read sites, and population, funding, event, and attendance figures, all of which show the scope and scale of the program. The section also explores relationships between these implementation factors.

Geographic Distribution of Grants

Big Read grants were first awarded in late 2006 and by mid-2008 had expanded to all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Table 2 shows the numbers of grants awarded by cycle, the states represented, and the sites receiving repeat grants. The maps in Figures 1-3 show the concentrations, and growth and changes, in the first three cycles. (See Appendix B, p. 183, for a list of grantees, by cycle and state.)

Table 2. Number of Grantees and States Represented by Cycle

	Grantees	States/D.C./Commonwealths/Territories	Repeat Grants
*Phase 1, Cycle 1	72	37	
*Phase 1, Cycle 2	117	42	1
*Phase 2, Cycle 1	126	40	35
Overall, first 3 cycles	**315**		**36**

*Designated henceforth in tables as P1C1, P1C2, and P2C1.

Figure 1. Phase 1, Cycle 1

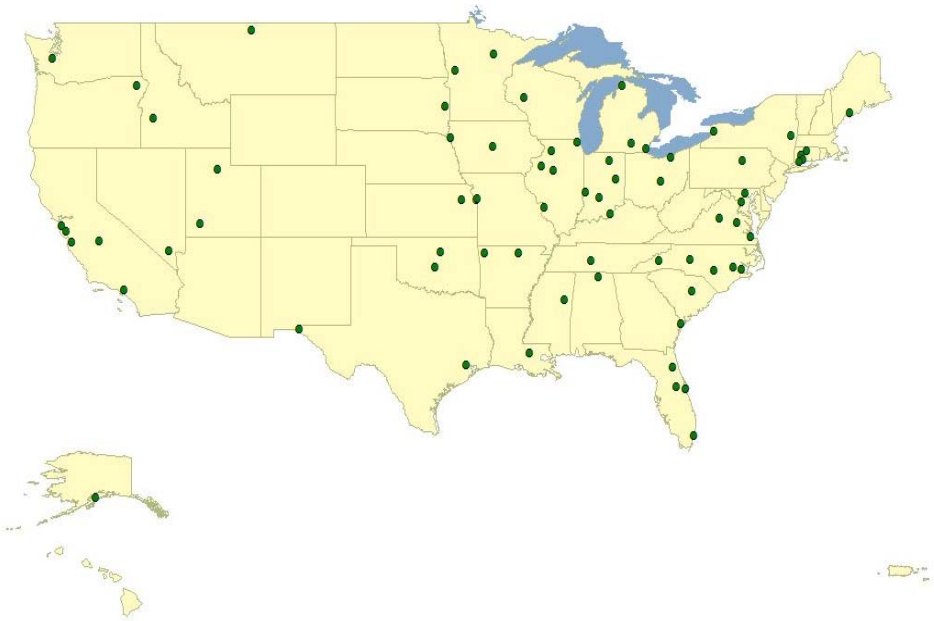


Figure 2. Phase 1, Cycle 2

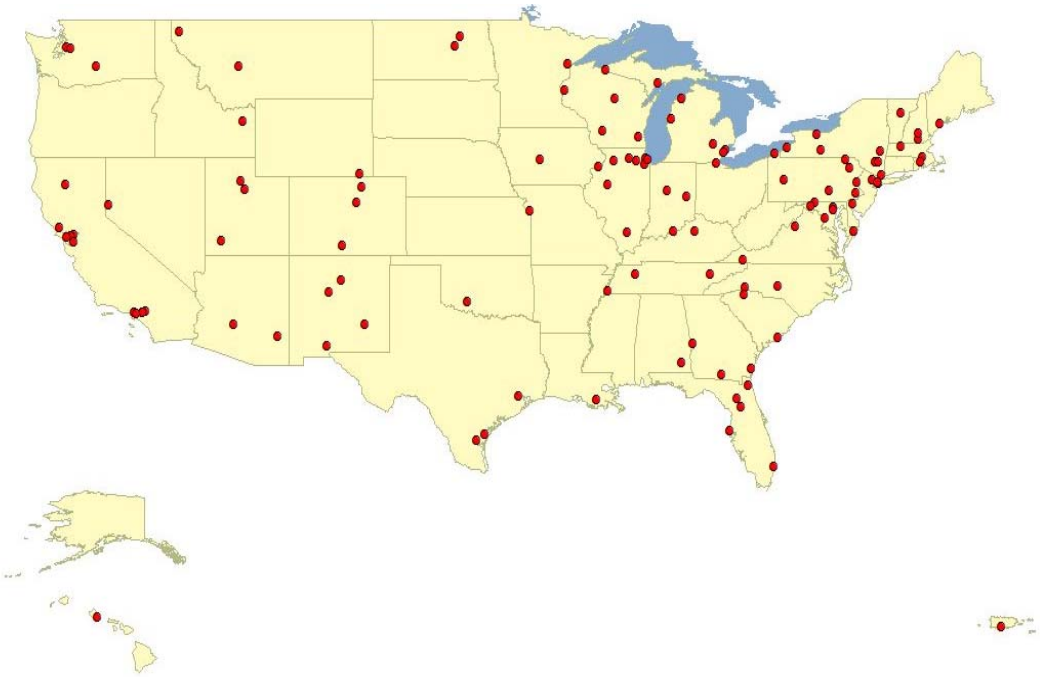
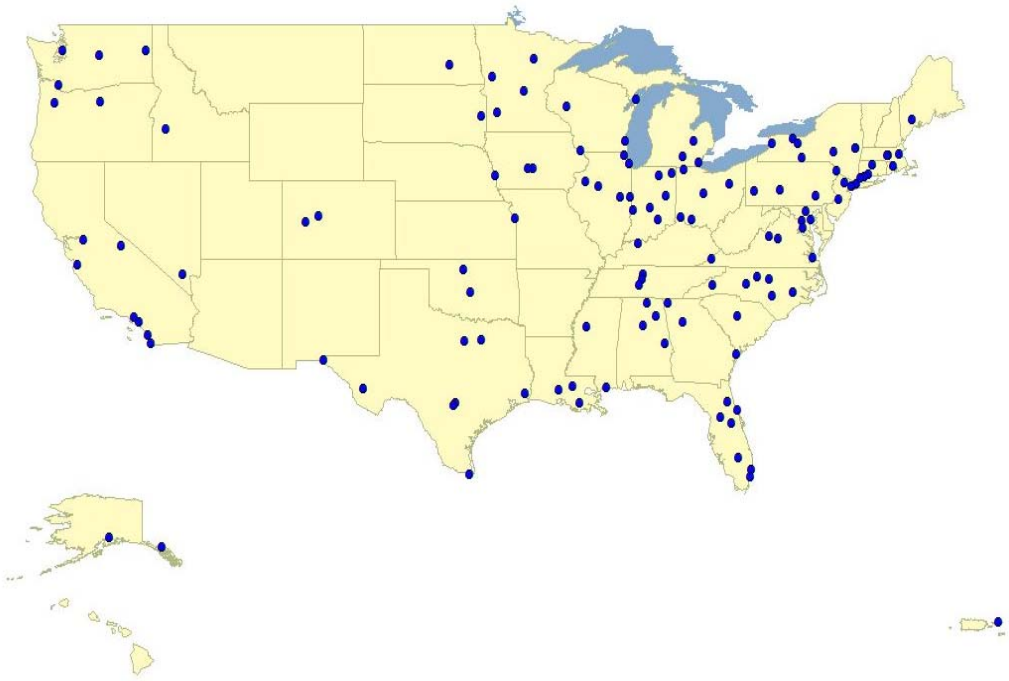


Figure 3. Phase 2, Cycle 1



As the maps illustrate, concentrations remained fairly constant across the three Big Read cycles, but the steady increase in numbers meant that all states, as well as the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, have been represented in The Big Read.

The geographic distribution of Big Read sites generally reflects the country's population density. The two largest clusters of sites, across all three cycles, are in the most densely populated areas in the South Atlantic (n=63), which includes eastern seaboard states from Delaware to Florida; and in the East North Central (n=60), which includes the major metropolitan areas of the Midwest. The next largest clusters are in the Middle-Atlantic states (n=37), or New York and Pennsylvania, and the Pacific (n=37) coastal areas. Table 3 shows the frequencies and percentages of sites, by the nine geographic areas identified by the U.S. Census Bureau.[12]

Table 3. Numbers and Percentages of Big Read Grantees by Geographic Region (N=312)

Region	Number of Big Read sites per region	Percent of Big Read sites in region	Percent of U.S. population residing in region
New England	21	6.7%	
Middle Atlantic	37	11.9%	
NORTHEAST	**58**	**18.6%**	**19.0%**
East North Central	60	19.2%	
West North Central	25	8.0%	
MIDWEST	**85**	**27.2%**	**22.9%**
South Atlantic	63	20.0%	
East South Central	20	6.3%	
West South Central	24	7.7%	
SOUTH	**106**	**34.0%**	**35.6%**
Mountain	26	8.3%	
Pacific	37	11.9%	
WEST	**63**	**20.2%**	**22.5%**

Source: Arts Midwest (AM) Database, U.S. 2000 Census Data
*Sites not included in regional breakdown are Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands

Across the four main geographic areas of the U.S., the percentage of Big Read sites was similar to the distribution in U.S. population, according to 2000 Census data: 18.6% of Big Read sites were in the Northeast, home to 19.0% of the population; in the Midwest, the percentages were 27.2 compared to 22.9; in the South, 34.0 compared to 35.6, and in the West, 20.2 compared to 22.5 (see Table 2).[13]

[12] U.S. Census, available from http://www.census.gov/.
[13] 2000 U.S. Census data, available from http://www.census.gov/main/www/cen2000.html.

Because a single grantee can serve multiple communities, it is difficult and not particularly fruitful to match distributions among Big Read sites to national breakdowns by locale, or by rural, suburban, and rural categories. For example, the Together We Read program in western North Carolina served 21 counties with a total population of 1,200,000, and included urban areas like the city of Asheville, as well as rural communities. Timberland Regional Library in Washington, like the Libraries of Eastern Oregon consortium, included multiple libraries that together serve large but sparsely populated geographic areas. Another fairly typical configuration is an implementation in a metropolitan area such as Hartford, Connecticut, which also fans out to suburban and even rural areas through partners and event venues.

Population Size

The self-reported population sizes of Big Read sites show a pattern similar to the distribution figures.[14] Over the first three cycles, twice as many Big Reads took place in communities with populations over 500,000 than in those with populations under 25,000. The greatest concentrations of sites were in areas with medium to large populations (between 99,000 and 500,000). (See Table 4.)

Table 4. Overall Breakdown of Big Read Sites by Population Size

Population Size	Number	Percent
Small (<25,000)	34	10.8
Medium (25,000-99,000)	86	27.3
Large (99,001-499,999)	124	39.4
(Very large) >500,000	71	22.5
TOTAL	315	100.0

Source: AM Database

According to grantees' proposal figures, the population of the smallest Big Read site, Ohio's Southern State Community College, is 1,500; the population of the largest, Columbia University in New York City, 8,143,197. The median population for a Big Read community was 150,000; the mean or average of reported population figures was 451,774, and the total, for the three cycles, 142,308,714. A standard deviation over two times the mean again reflects the wide range in population sizes of Big Read communities. (See Table 5.)

[14] Population figures and categories from the Arts Midwest database, based on figures in grantees' proposals, which indicate the size of the county or city in which the grantee organization is located, not necessarily the potential audience. See p. 9 for further discussion of designated Big Read populations.

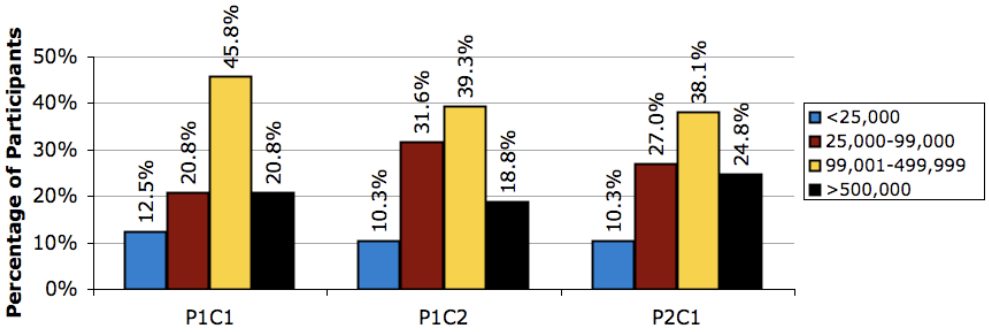
Table 5. Range in Population Size (N=315)

	Median Population	Mean or Average Population	Standard Deviation[15]	Sum of Population Figures	Smallest Reported Population	Largest Reported Population
Population Size	150,000	451,774	918,342	142,308,714	1,500	8,143,197

Source: AM Database

Breakdowns by the program's first three cycles show relative balance across population size, with similar distributions, across cycles, in the small and large populations. In P1C1, fewer medium-sized populations were represented among grantees; in P1C2, those numbers increased. (See Figure 4.)

Figure 4. Population Breakdowns by Cycle



Source: AM Database

Designated Big Read Area

In their proposals, grantees also indicate the population of the designated area of their Big Read programming. Although the numbers are not exact because grantees may have arrived at the figures for their potential audience in different ways, these figures offer another vantage on potential audiences for the program. Reported figures show:

- Communities with small or medium population sizes designated a Big Read population area that exceeded their actual population—a not unfounded prediction, since small or medium communities could anticipate interest from surrounding areas. Grantees in small communities (<25,000) designated a Big Read population area almost twice the size of their actual population; those in medium-sized communities, an area almost three times larger.

- For larger communities, designated Big Read populations were closer to or smaller than actual populations, with very large communities targeting a population two-thirds the size of their actual population. Again, this is not surprising, because grantees in very large urban areas might not assume that everyone in a densely populated urban areas would attend Big Read events, or that these events would draw audiences beyond urban areas.

[15] Standard Deviation indicates how widely dispersed population figures were across sites or how much they deviated from an average figure of 451,774.

Table 6 shows the comparisons between the designated Big Read population area and the overall population; again, the range and large standard deviations from the mean indicate the variance within and across categories.

Table 6. Comparison of the Designated Big Read Populations to Overall Populations

Population <25,000

	Number of Sites Reporting	Mean	Std Dev	Smallest Reported Population	Largest Reported Population
Population Size	34	12,663.1	6,572.1	1,500.0	23,983.0
Designated Big Read Population	32	24,715.1	39,352.4	2,075.0	226,749.0

Population 25,001-99,000

	Number	Mean	Std Dev	Smallest Reported Population	Largest Reported Population
Population Size	86	55,628.3	18,390.4	27,000.0	98,897.0
Designated Big Read Population	83	175,165.7	845,988.5	9,500.0	7,642,884.0

Population 99,001-499,999

	Number	Mean	Std Dev	Smallest Reported Population	Largest Reported Population
Population Size	124	230,389.4	111,841.7	100,000.0	495,845.0
Designated Big Read Population	118	308,566.3	371,900.0	12,500.0	3,000,000.0

Population >500,000

	Number	Mean	Std Dev	Smallest Reported Population	Largest Reported Population
Population Size	71	1,528,533.1	1,487,068.5	500,000.0	8,143,197.0
Designated Big Read Population	62	1,039,933.4	863,615.0	7,939.0	4,189,844.0

Source: AM Database

Event and Attendance Figures

Based on figures reported to Arts Midwest at the time of this report, grantees had held almost 10,000 events and over 6,000 book club discussions. They reported event attendance figures over one million, and book discussion attendance at around 225,000. Table 7 shows the breakdowns by cycles and by adult and under-18 attendees.

Table 7. Total Event, Book Discussions, and Attendance Figures

	Number of Events	Overall Attendance	Adult Attendance	< 18 Attendance	Number of Book Discussions	Adult Attendance	< 18 Attendance
P1C1 (n=72)	2,403	214,660	143,444	71,216	1,504	21,607	3,107
P1C2 (n=117)	3,908	719,480	493,057	226,423	2,788	55,730	117,841
P2C1 (n=107)	3,173	249,853	136,091	113,762	1,721	20,262	7,937
3 Cycles (N=296)	9,484	1,183,993	772,592	411,401	6,013	97,599	128,855

Source: AM Database

We know that community members often attend multiple events, and thus may be counted more than once in reported totals. The other caveat in looking at the figures is that there appears to be a wide range in figures not wholly explained by differences in community size. Attendance for statewide, regional, or urban programs could be expected to exceed that in small communities, but some differences appear to be due to reporting or counting irregularities. The following discussion of relationships between size, events, and attendance includes a footnote explaining how averages change when outliers are removed (see footnote 7).

Relationships between Size, Events, and Attendance

An examination of the number of events and attendance by population size shows that numbers increased with population size, but not in direct proportion. Programs in towns with populations under 25,000 held an average of 22 events; those with medium-sized populations, 29 events; large populations, 32, and very large populations, 48. Although the average numbers of events increased with population size, there generally appeared to be no relationship between population size and the number of Big Read events—some large or very large communities held the same number or fewer events than medium-sized communities. Only in the smallest populations did size correlate with events: small Big Read sites generally held fewer events than larger ones. Data on book club discussions showed that their numbers did not vary greatly. Although there was a drop in the average number of discussions in medium-sized communities, there were spikes in attendance, especially among those under eighteen, which may be due to reporting irregularities.[16]

Based on attendance figures supplied by grantees in their final reports, there was a positive relationship between event attendance and size: the larger the community, the higher the number of attendees. Small towns, on average, reported adult attendance of around 2,400; medium-sized towns, 2,600; and large and very large cities, 3,900 and 4,000 respectively. See Tables 8 and 9.

[16] Among the problems that we ran into with these data are the likely inaccuracies or estimate and reporting differences. For example, in the case of book club discussions, one medium-size site (25,001-99000) reported 23,391 attendees. This one observation bumped up the mean for that category to 647.2. When we deleted this case, the next greatest maximum for the medium category was 706, dropping the mean down to 201.2. Eliminating this one case also dramatically reduced the average <18 years-of-age attendance value to 682.8. There were also outliers in the event attendee data. When we removed the outliers that were 4 times the standard deviation, averages for adult and <18 attendance for large and very large populations dropped, as indicated by the values in parentheses in Table 9.

Table 8. Book Club Discussions and Attendance Figures by Population Size (N=189, Cycles 1 and 2)*

Population Size	Average # of Book Club Discussions	Average # of Adult Attendees across Sites	Average # of Attendees <18 Years Old
Small (<25,000)	23	179	119
Medium (25,001-99,000)	18	647 (201)**	1,321 (683)**
Large (99,001-499,999)	24	332	268
Very Large (>500,000)	28	370	774

*Source: AM Database. Because we did not have data from all Phase 2, Cycle 1 grantees, we looked only at reports on attendance from Phase 1, Cycles 1 and 2.
**Mean values when outliers 4 times the standard deviation are removed. See footnote 7.

Table 9. Event and Attendance Figures by Population Size (N=189)

Population Size	Average # of Events	Average # of Adult Attendees across sites	Average # of Attendees <18 Years Old across sites
Small (<25,000)	22	2,399	629
Medium (25,001-99,000)	29	2,557	1,574
Large (99,001-499,999)	32	3,878 (2,895)**	1,907 (967)*
Very Large (>500,000)	48	3,966 (2,279)**	1,404 (1,355)*

Source: AM database
**Mean values when three outliers are removed. See footnote 16.

We explored comparisons between population size, designated Big Read populations, and attendees, but found no clear trends or correlations. This may be due to reporting irregularities, but it may also be the case, as suggested by Arts Midwest, that so much changes between a proposal and the beginning and end of a Big Read that comparisons may not be meaningful.

Funding Ranges

Applicants may apply for Big Read grants ranging from $2,500 to $20,000, based on factors such as population size and the numbers of activities proposed. Typically, larger grants go to larger communities. Across all three cycles, Big Read sites (N=315) received a total of $4,338,372. Additional funding for Big Read sites in five states in the Pacific Northwest came from the Paul Allen Foundation. Grantees also had the option of working with their local community foundation to apply to the national Community Foundations of America for matching Kellogg funds. The Boeing Company also provided financial support for materials for military bases.

According to the application guidelines, grant funds must be matched dollar for dollar with non-federal funds. According to Arts Midwest, the final total for matching funds in the first three cycles was $9,925,667, indicating that in some sites matching funds actually exceeded grant dollars. Based on reports from 284 of the 315 sites, in-kind contributions totaled $6,394,570. Table 10 shows the largest and smallest amounts reported for in-kind contributions and a large standard deviation, but, again, grantees may have computed or reported figures differently: some, for example, may have included volunteer personnel costs in in-kind contributions, while others may have excluded them. Based on a few zero dollar figures, some grantees may not have had

complete data when they submitted reports. Even though in-kind figures may not be precise or comparable, a maximum figure of $213,367 and a mean of $22,516 indicate the considerable range in sites, and considerable support from partnering agencies and local contributors. (See p. 37 for the report of the in-kind promotion totaling $213,367, the maximum figure in Table 10.)

Table 10. Big Read Funding Statistics (N=315, 284)

Funding	Number Reporting	Mean	Std Dev	Sum of Dollars	Smallest Grant	Largest Grant
Grant dollars	315	$13,773	6,381	$4,338,372	$2,500	$20,000
*In-Kind dollars	284	$22,516	27,588	$6,394,570	0 (missing data)	$213,367

Source: AM database
*In-kind dollars are listed in final reports, not all of which were available from P2C1 at this writing.

Representation across Institution Type

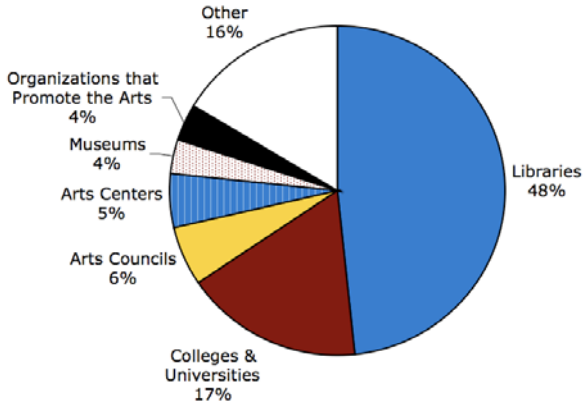
Big Read grant recipients range from libraries and museums, to cities and tribal governments, to state-level humanities councils and public television affiliates. An interest in literature and the arts unites grantees, but there are also groups devoted largely to programming aims such as writing and literacy or community development and service that sought participation. Table 11 shows the representation by institution type and cycle, and the overall totals for each. Figure 5 shows the relative percentages.

Table 11. Representation by Institution Type (N=315)

Type of Institution	Number	Percent	P1C1	P1C2	P2C1	Number, Repeats	Percent, Repeats
Libraries	152	48.3	42	57	53	16	10.5
Colleges & Universities	54	17.1	9	19	26	4	7.4
Arts councils/agencies	19	6.0	1	13	5	—	—
Arts centers	16	5.1	4	5	7	2	12.5
Museums	11	3.5	2	5	4	2	—
Organizations that support/promote arts	11	3.5	1	4	6	2	18.2
Community Service Organizations	8	2.5	2	2	4	2	25.0
Social Service Organizations	7	2.2	1	4	2	1	14.2
Performing Groups or Facilities	7	2.2	—	4	3	—	—
Humanities Councils	7	2.2	3	—	4	3	42.9
Community foundations	6	1.9	—	2	4	—	—
Festivals and Cultural Series	6	1.9	3	—	3	2	33.3
Cities	5	1.6	2	—	3	1	20.0
Media (radio and television)	3	1.0	1	1	1	1	33.3
Reservations	2	0.6	1	1	—	—	—
Health Care Organizations	1	0.3	—	—	1	—	—
TOTALS	315	99.9	72	117	126	36 (11.4%)	

Source: AM database

Figure 5. Representation by Main Institution Types



Source: AM Database

Overall, 36, or just over 10% of the participating institutions, were awarded more than one grant, typically receiving grants in P1C1 and P2C1, which gave grantees time in-between to enlist (or re-enlist) local supporters and partners, select a Big Read book, and re-apply. Libraries, with the largest number of grants overall, also had the most repeats, at 16. The other institution types with high percentages of repeat grants included Humanities Councils and festivals and cultural series. Although these institutions had relatively few grants overall—four and six respectively—three out of four humanities councils and two of the six cultural series received second grants. One explanation may be that these were generally large organizations, with programming and promotional staff and mechanisms in place to mount a second effort.

Range among Institutions

In all three Big Read cycles studied for this report, libraries received the largest number of grants, approximately half of those awarded—not surprising, given, as IMLS Director Anne-Imelda M. Radice observed, that with resources, staff, and activities already in place, libraries are ideally suited to host Big Reads.[17] Percentages decreased somewhat in successive cycles: from 58.3% in P1C1, to 48.7% in P1C2, to 42.1% in P2C1. The next largest group was colleges and universities, with an overall average of 17.1%. Colleges and universities also showed the greatest growth in numbers from cycle to cycle, increasing from 9 receiving grants in P1C1, to 19 in P1C2, and 26 grants in P2C1. One non-library grantee noted, "We were quite happy to learn that The Big Read, despite being of obvious appeal to libraries, was not limited to them as grant recipients" (Center for Asian Arts and Media at Columbia College, Chicago).

Within institution types there was considerable diversity. As noted in the discussion of population size, grants went to small community colleges—whose numbers grew from three in the first cycle to eight in the third—and to large universities such as Columbia and the University of North Carolina. There were colleges and universities in sparsely populated areas, such as the Kachemak Bay Campus of Kenai Peninsula College in Homer, Alaska, and higher education institutions in

[17] Big Read press release, available at: http://www.neabigread.org/pressreleases.php.

big cities, like Washington University in St. Louis. Museum grantees included the Georgia O'Keefe Museum in Santa Fe, New Mexico, which houses the largest collection of the artists' work and is the only museum in the world devoted to an internationally known woman artist, and Hometown Perry, Iowa, a museum, created to tell the story of the immigrant experience in the Midwest.

Starting in Cycle 2, more performing arts groups received grants. Here, too, there was notable variety: a grant went to the 75 year-old Barter Theatre in Abingdon, Virginia, so named because Depression-era patrons bartered produce for theatre tickets, and the Black Storytellers of San Diego, California, part of a national association created in 1990 to preserve a rich African oral tradition.[18]

The second and third cycles also saw increases in grants to non-arts or literary organizations: service and health organizations such as the South Central Tennessee Workforce Alliance and the Rhode Island Coalition against Domestic Violence, the Knoxville, Tennessee YMCA, the Boy Scouts of America in Burlington, New Jersey, and UMass Memorial Health Care. The range in organizations and new types added each cycle makes it increasingly clear that support for the arts and literary reading is not limited to arts-centered or reading-focused organizations.

Differences in Implementation by Institution Type

A review of various figures reported by grantees in the first two cycles showed some differences within and across grantee types. Variation in how grantees compute figures and missing data should, again, be considered when examining averages. We have included data on events and partners, which are easier to count than attendees or in-kind dollars, and, across communities, relatively similar, with no steep upward trends based on size. (See Table 12.)

- Numbers of partners were relatively similar, except for higher average numbers for festivals, and slightly lower numbers for community and social service organizations. (See also p. for a discussion of partners.)

- Numbers of events showed some variation as well: the averages for museums and performing groups were lower, with an average of 17-18; for social service organizations, averages were higher, at 66.

[18]Georgia O'Keefe Museum, http://www.okeeffemuseum.org/home.aspx; Hometown Perry Iowa, http://hpi.design.iastate.edu

Table 12. Partner and Event Breakdown by Institution Type (N=189, Phase 1 or first 2 cycles only)

Type of Institution	Average Number of Partners	Average Number of Events
Libraries (N=99)	12.6	38
Colleges & Universities (N=28)	9.0	23
Arts councils/agencies (N=14)	9.5	33
Arts centers (N= 9)	11.9	28
Museums (N= 7)	12.6	18
Organizations that support the arts (N=5)	13.2	26
Community Service Organizations (N=4)	26.0	22
Social Service Organizations (N=5)	28.8	66
Performing Groups or Facilities (N=4)	7.5	17
Humanities Councils (N=3)	13.3	25
Community foundations (N=2)	4.0	43
Festivals and Cultural Series (N=3)	43.7	44
Cities (N=2)	0*	29
Media (radio and television (N=2)	0*	25
Tribal governments (N=2)	0*	25

*Missing data

We also looked at various ratios between dollars, events, population size, and attendance, to better understand the relationships among factors involved in a Big Read implementation and identify factors that might differentiate sites. For example, to determine if Big Read grantees serving larger populations had a greater proportion of in-kind contributions relative to the size of their NEA grant dollars, we compared correlations between grantee population size and the ratio of in kind-dollars to total grant dollars. In these and other analyses, we found only very small, tentative correlations, most likely due to the variance in reported numbers.

Factors that Connect and Differentiate Big Read Communities

It may be that statistics are not the best measure of how implementations differ and what they share. The area served, and the character of a site as portrayed in the qualitative data, may better define local Big Read chapters as well as the nascent national book club. Programs involving statewide organizations, such as the South Dakota Humanities Council, the Wyoming Center for the Book, or The Big Read Hawai'i, which included 5 islands, 51 libraries, and the Department of Education, call for a management and distribution apparatus different from those employed in a big city Big Read, though overall population sizes may not vary a great deal. A more distributed model allows a certain amount of freedom in implementation and assumes that individual

municipalities will create their own local identity. A looser confederation also characterizes Together We Read in western North Carolina, made up of libraries, bookstores, historical societies, museums, universities—all united by a love of reading and an appreciation of a shared heritage, but separated by mountains, winding roads, and a desire to nurture local programming. Though other Big Reads such as Timberland Reads in Tumwater, Washington or the Libraries of Eastern Oregon are regional, and fall into the same population category, their goals seem not so much to diversify programming as to provide a shared experience across rural areas.

Timberland's six simultaneous Kick-off events and subsequent activities lent a small-town aspect to this fairly big read. The same was true even in some urban areas: the local focus in each of four cities in the Southwestern Connecticut Regional Collaborative led a Bridgeport librarian to say that The Big Read gave a big-city library a small town feel. Other comparable communities—nearby Hartford, for example—brought to their Big Reads a distinctly urban feel, devising ways to engage teens in The Big Read with discussions of how Dashiel Hammet's urban San Francisco landscape compared to the urban fiction very popular among teens, and inviting homeless citizens seeking shelter in the library to join book discussions.

Timberland Regional Library has 27 community libraries, 5 cooperative library centers, and two library kiosks spread across five counties surrounding the capital city of Olympia, Washington. The service area covers nearly 7,000 square miles and serves a population of more than 422,000 residents. Timberland launched its own successful community literacy program, called Timberland Reads Together, two years ago. Timberland kicked-off their Big Read with simultaneous events in six locations. In each of the six sites, at noon, community leaders and members of the local press read excerpts from My Ántonia in outdoor public events held in the heart of each community—in the town square, on the steps of the courthouse, and in front of the Capital Dome.

When a small town does a Big Read, a big part of the community gets involved. In Canton, Illinois, libraries, schools, churches, prisons, restaurants, law firms, retirees, the YMCA, the YWCA—all took part. The mayor issued a proclamation, ministers delivered sermons for a month of Sundays, students read to shut-ins, inmates designed a six-foot high replica of the book, and a farmer tuned in from the cab of his tractor to listen to the daily radio reading of To Kill a Mockingbird*. It wasn't just a small-town affinity that drew Canton to Harper Lee's novel. Key themes—racial injustice, intolerance, domestic violence—struck chords as well, and discussing them as a community brought a "cohesiveness and a common vision" to this Illinois town, said the project coordinator, and showed that "there are more readers out there than many people would believe."*

There are Big Reads, like the one in Canton, Illinois, in Fulton County, that can rightfully claim small-town status. The town's population stands at 16,000; the county's, at 37,000. Big Read partners and participants included a wide swath of the community: the library, community college, four main churches, the high school and alternative school, prison inmates, retirement groups, professional organizations, and local eateries and businesses. In a post- program interview, the coordinator said she really couldn't think of any group that wasn't touched by the project. Their final attendance figures bear this out: almost 20,000 adults and 7,000 children took part.

SECTION 2: BOOK SELECTION

What titles do communities select and why?

Book selection—one of the first things grantees do, even prior to writing a proposal—shows what grantees or communities have in common and the contrasts that give their individual Big Read a distinct character. Grantees select a book from a growing list that started with eight titles in the first cycle and doubled by the third. (Table 13 shows The Big Read titles grantees selected for each cycle, and the number and percentage of grantees selecting each one.) Most grantees look for titles that are accessible and relevant for a wide range of audiences; factors such as the availability of translations and large-print versions, and the likelihood that a book is on junior high or high school reading lists, enter into the equation as well. In some communities, selection is an internal decision. Library or institution boards—some of which may have chosen books for previous one-book efforts—review titles, set forth their reasons for choosing one over another, then vote. Some communities, time permitting, include partners, especially school partners, in the selection. In one Big Read site, The Big Read book was determined by a community-wide vote, following the tradition set by previous one-book programs in the community.

Table 13. Distribution of Big Read Titles across Cycles and Overall

Big Read Title	P1C1		P1C2		P2C1		Overall Number of Sites Selecting Book
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
A Farewell to Arms	2	2.8	2	1.7	2	1.6	6
To Kill a Mockingbird	19	26.4	28	23.9	23	18.3	70
Fahrenheit 451	14	14	24	20.5	20	15.9	58
My Ántonia	4	5.6	7	6.0	8	6.4	19
Their Eyes Were Watching God	10	13.9	14	12.0	13	10.3	37
The Grapes of Wrath	12	16.7	6	5.1	3	2.4	21
The Great Gatsby	6	8.3	6	5.1	8	6.4	20
The Joy Luck Club	5	6.9	9	7.7	6	4.8	20
Bless Me, Ultima			13	11.1	9	7.1	22
The Age of Innocence			2	1.7	1	0.8	3
The Heart is a Lonely Hunter			1	0.9	1	0.8	2
The Maltese Falcon			5	4.3	15	11.9	20
A Lesson Before Dying					6	4.8	6
The Call of the Wild					7	5.6	7
The Death of Ivan Ilyich					3	2.4	3
The Shawl					1	0.8	1

Source: AM Database

Distribution across Titles

The most frequently chosen book was Harper Lee's *To Kill A Mockingbird*, followed by Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* and Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, read by 70, 58, and 37 communities respectively. Twenty or more communities chose *Bless Me, Ultima*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *The Joy Luck Club*, *The Great Gatsby*, and *The Maltese Falcon*. Explaining their choices in proposals or interviews, grantees typically say they chose a book because its themes resonated with their communities, and the themes of racial discrimination and tolerance addressed in *To Kill a Mockingbird* are as timely today as they were in 1960 when the book was written. Further comments in final narratives and interviews say a lot about how communities define themselves, what issues they face, and how The Big Read brought more people into conversations about those issues. Even with the same book, the variety in how communities explore the themes is striking. Harper Lee's biographer, Charles Shields, who has been to numerous Big Reads, said, "I haven't seen any two communities offer the same menu of programs."[19] The book worked as well for small-town Illinois as for a tribal community, for a small southern town as for a large northern one. Elders and children in Little Traverse Bay, and mothers in Bridgeport's Mercy Learning Centers English Language Learners class found that the book led them to poignant discussions about childhood and the moral education of children.

Some selections are a natural fit: The Cabin, a literary center in Boise, Idaho, chose *A Farewell to Arms* not only because Hemingway wrote and lived in Idaho but also because a partnership with a nearby military base allowed them to engage enlistees, families, and veterans in a discussion of "war and healing," drawing on the expertise of a local university scholar and physician who has studied Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. *The Grapes of Wrath* fit well for Oklahoma and other Midwestern communities with collective memories of the Dust Bowl. It was a less obvious but still natural fit for Ironwood, Michigan (see sidebar), and for an Hispanic, often migrant community in Los Angeles, where the Will & Co. theatre group engaged students in performances based on scenes from the book. Similarly, *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter* turned out to be a fitting choice for a small Iowa town (see sidebar).

The mission of Hometown Perry, Iowa is to "study, understand, communicate, and celebrate the vital contribution small towns have made to American life as seen through the prism of the immigrant experience." At first glance, a novel that takes place in the Depression-era South and tells the story of four lonely misfits who confide in a deaf-mute may seem an odd choice for a Midwestern museum celebrating the immigrant experience. What links The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter *and Hometown Perry, Iowa is a belief in the power of stories of ordinary people and small-town life to recite a larger narrative of human existence. Hometown Perry's collection of artifacts, displayed on the museum campus and in exhibits at the high school library and cafeteria, a coffee house, and the Carnegie Library, is "anchored by the personal stories of hundreds of Perry area residents." The tone of Carson McCuller's first novel is one of isolation, but her characters' attempts to connect resonated with Perry residents, and made it a fitting choice for an institution that invites patrons to "come and find oneself in the stories of others, both past and present."*

[19] Correspondence with Charles Shields, April 29, 2007.

Some communities select books not just to satisfy audiences but to reach new ones, or to share an untold story. Together We Read in North Carolina selected *My Ántonia* because of a growing immigrant population. Libraries of Eastern Oregon chose *The Joy Luck Club* to tell the story of Chinese immigrants in eastern Oregon, and promote the Kam Wah Chung Museum, the only remaining original Chinatown structure in the American West. They considered *The Grapes of Wrath*, but decided "You get that story other places, what you don't get is the Chinese immigrant story…. let's talk about an unknown part of our history and immigrants."

For the most part, grantees reported success with their choices, but also noted that different criteria may drive the choice for their next Big Read. Ironwood, Michigan, which did choose *The Grapes of Wrath*, found that the book generated good conversations but was a difficult read for some. The Brooklyn Public Library, whose goal is to greatly "increase, among their diverse patrons, readership of classic literature," noted that "The Big Read was successful in increasing the African-American audience's interest in the works and life of Zora Neale Hurston. Unfortunately, Hispanic and East Asian audiences were not as interested.... As a nation, our interests in various literary works are still closely related to our individual ethnic backgrounds."

> *Looking back, the Big Read coordinator said* The Grapes of Wrath *provided "good fodder for conversation." Parts of it, though, "hit too close to home and that caused some reluctance to get in and talk about it." "Frankly," she added, "[it's] a long book, dense with beautiful passages, but a hard book for people to tackle. A lot of the reaction at first was, 'I read it in high school and hated it.' That negative connotation was set already. [It was] hard to convince people to take another look, a harder sell than other books might have been. We had never had a community read program here, [and] right off the bat we picked a really hard book."(Ironwood, MI)*

The Utah Arts Council faced an unforeseen issue in its selection of Anaya's *Bless Me, Ultima*, the resolution of which allowed them to engage the Navajo community.

> *Our Big Read project almost blew up in our faces when the selected book turned out to include too many subjects that were taboo to the traditional Navajo community parents, tribal leaders, and elders. With Arts Midwest's permission, we changed books. Just listening to the Native leadership in our school district wide faculty meeting and demonstrating our willingness to change books rather than force the originally selected book on the community sent a loud and clear message. Had we not changed books, not only would they not have read the book but they would have stayed away from the events. By changing the book to one that resonated with them,* Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven, *we demonstrated our commitment to upholding traditional Navajo beliefs and community wishes. The kids, school, community had the blessing of the Navajo elders and these lapsed and reluctant readers not only read, but they participated in the final event which was in competition with athletic events and a very large healing ceremony. (Utah Arts Council, Salt Lake City)*

SECTION 3: PARTNERSHIPS

What roles do partners play, and what partnerships prove most productive and sustainable?

Overview

The Big Read was designed not only to bring people together to read—but also to bring partners together to plan and promote events that would make people want to read. No matter what the size, scope, or book choice, partnerships, were, according to grantees, critical to the success of local Big Reads. Some grantees called "the building of partnerships" their "biggest and perhaps most long-lasting success." Most also agreed that the "concept behind The Big Read" and the prestige of an NEA grant attracted partners and helped them "cross many barriers, uniting nonprofits and businesses, academics and public libraries, children and adults, and people of all ethnicities and socio-economic levels." The fact that many partnerships were unprecedented accounted for challenges as well as for prospects for future collaboration.

Grantees enlist a team of official partners as well as other community organizations in the Big Reads. They report libraries, museums, K-12 schools, and military bases separately. In the first three cycles, grantees engaged 2,682 libraries, bringing the total of libraries participating in the first three cycles, as grantee or partner, to 2,834. Grantees also reported a total of 4,445 schools and 10,304 teachers taking part in the program. Grantees in each cycle also partnered with military bases: in the first cycle, eight grantees partnered with 11 bases; in the second cycle, 12 grantees partnered with 15 bases; and, in the third, 22 grantees partnered with 25 bases, bringing the total of military bases taking part in The Big Read in the first three cycles to 51.

Grantees in the program's first three cycles also enlisted the support of 3,481 other community partner organizations: 1,272 in the first cycle; 1,126 in the second; and 1,083 in the third (based on reports from 76% of the grantees). Numbers reported by each site varied a great deal—with some sites reporting two partners, and others, as many as 80, but overall figures show that, on average, grantees collaborated with 12 community partners on their Big Read programs.

Reported figures do not vary greatly by population size. Small communities, or those with populations under 25,000, had, on average, fewer partners—9.1 per grantee—but otherwise, averages were consistent across population ranges, with between 13 and 14 partners per grantee for sites with populations ranging from 25,000 to over 500,000. (See Table 14.) This may indicate that between nine and fourteen key partners provide adequate collective support for a local Big Read.

Table 14. Numbers of Partners by Population Size

Average Number of Partners	Population Size
9.1	Small (<25,000)
13.0	Medium (25,001-99,000)
13.4	Large (99,001-499,999)
13.9	Very Large (>500,000)

Source: AM Database

As noted in the previous section, reports of numbers of partners do vary by institution type. (See Table 12, p. 16 for the average number of partners by institution type, and the numbers within each type reporting data.) Festivals and cultural series reported, on average, the largest numbers of partners (43.7), followed by social service (28.8) and community service (26.0) organizations. These higher numbers may be explained, in part, by the fact that festivals require the support of numerous community partners and turned to them for The Big Read. Service organizations, too—United Way, YWCAs—especially those with a long history in the community and a broad swath of the community in their service area, may also have had a longer list of existing partners. Community foundations, performing groups, and tribal organizations reported the fewest partners, with an average of 4.0, 7.5, and 7.0, respectively.

Partner Roles and Activities

Big Read partners generally comprised the same types of organizations as grantees—libraries, museums, schools, municipal organizations, the media, arts centers—but also included some new and unexpected public sector partners, such as public transportation and churches, as well as private-sector groups like bookstores, hotels, and restaurants. Partner activities fell into four general categories, described below and followed by examples of conventional and unique partner activities by institution type. (Partnerships with schools are discussed in Part Five, p. 112.)

- **Bringing in new audiences**. Partners brought their constituent groups to The Big Read, along with expertise in attracting particular audiences. In final report narratives and survey responses, grantees indicated that, collectively, they were able to "reach larger audiences than either could have reached alone geographically and demographically," and that their own and partners' organizations benefited from "cross-promotion" and "cross-over" patrons.

- **Expanding programming.** Partners planned and hosted events, coordinated logistics, and provided ideas for programs. Many volunteered time and expertise in other ways, using contacts to engage speakers, sponsoring bus trips to events or historic sites, or recording events for later distribution via CD, DVD, web, and television.

- **Providing venues.** Performing arts groups and others with performance space donated venues for plays, films, readings, court scenes, and other events. Partner venues also included school football stadiums, military base libraries, bookseller and other coffee shops, and gallery space.

- **Extending marketing and promotion**. Partners, and not only media partners, played a key role in promotion, serving as spokespersons and advocates, and, through their own listservs, mailing lists, newsletters, web sites, press contacts, and radio and TV outlets, spreading information to new media markets.

- **Contributing funds and in-kind resources.** In addition to providing venues free of charge, partners offered corporate sponsorships, paid for speakers, funded free books, contributed publicity and public relations experience, and raised funds from private sources. In-kind contributions also included PR expertise and graphic design.

Libraries. Every non-library grantee enlisted the help of local libraries, which distributed materials, created exhibits and displays, hosted book discussions and events for children and families, facilitated discussions in other locations such as senior centers and schools—and served, as they often do, as a community hub for reading activities. As grantees explained,

> *Partnering with the libraries…in each participating community made this project possible. The staff in each partner location knows their own local community and was able to tailor The Big Read programming for that community. They also know the town officials, reporters, teachers, and community leaders who could provide local "buzz" about the project. (Georgia O'Keefe Museum, Santa Fe, NM)*

Museums and Historical Societies. Museums often provided the backdrop for community events, bringing the historical context of a chosen book to life with photo exhibits, tours of historic places, and other displays, often open to the public throughout The Big Read.

> *More than 400 people viewed the exhibits about immigrant farmers on the Oswego Prairie at the Oswego Public Library and the Little White School House museum. The assistant director said that some people related that they came to the museum because they saw the exhibit at the library, and we also had people tell us that they came to the library specifically because they saw the exhibit at the museum. (Aurora Public Library, Aurora, IL)*

Humanities Councils, Literary and Arts Centers, and Cultural Organizations. The numerous arts, humanities, and cultural groups that partnered with Big Read grantees provided support, with promotion through speakers bureaus, newsletters, and web sites. Groups organized and hosted events at their own cultural facilities or performing spaces, and organized information sessions for adults, interactive workshops for children, and exhibits for schools.

Our partnership with the Antonio E. Garcia Arts Center was particularly productive. They are located in a low-income neighborhood where many of the residents are traditionally non-readers. By placing our photo exhibit in the center and hosting our storyteller there, we were able to reach out to one of our key target audiences. Also, their after school program insured that both the public and their clients would be able to enjoy our storyteller program. (Friends of Corpus Christi Public Library, Corpus Christi, TX)

Local Media. Local media played a key role in Big Read promotion, described in more detail in the following section. Newspapers (including main and school newspapers) contributed advertising space, published calendars, covered events, printed promotional materials, and wrote columns about themes in The Big Read book and the value of reading for the community and the nation. TV stations (public television, community and local network stations) aired book discussions and community events. Radio stations played the PSAs, conducted interviews with grantees, played audio guide excerpts, promoted events, posted installments of the book on web sites, and gave free 15-second spots read by on-air personalities.

The Daily Ledger *covered events and carried a series of four newspaper articles, one each week, about* To Kill a Mockingbird*. The articles shared the troubling findings from "Reading at Risk," described events, and discussed the books themes and issues and their connection to the local community. According to the author, the four Big Read articles prompted more public comments than anything he'd ever written, with the exception of school awards. The high school newspaper,* The CHS Pennant*, also carried pieces on The Big Read, including a promo for Halloween High School and the freshman class's Boo Radley House, which read: "If you're lucky, you might catch a glimpse of the misunderstood Boo Radley. And if you do, how will you treat him?" (Canton, IL)*

Churches, Community Centers, and Service Organizations. Often active Big Read advocates, churches and service-oriented agencies hosted events and engaged community members of all ages in discussions of the larger themes of the novels. These partners included County Agencies on Aging, Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCAs, Scouts, 4-H, Rotary Clubs, Kiwanis, County Bar Associations, and various philanthropies. Sites reading *To Kill a Mockingbird* found their county bar associations or legal groups eager to partner to provide programming on legal issues in the novel. Other events ranged from exhibits at county fairs, to reflections by seniors at retirement centers speaking about their experiences during The Great Depression, to YWCA-sponsored walks against domestic violence. In some sites, ministers based their sermons on themes in the novels. One concept involved a youth-serving agency as the lead organization:

The First Church of Deerfield used The Big Read Fahrenheit 451 *materials for a church-wide read (instead of a sermon) in observance of Reformation Sunday in October. During the Reformation, Luther's German translation of the Bible was burned, and Tyndale himself was burned at the stake for his English translation. Freedom of the press and freedom of religion are listed together in the same breath in the Bill of Rights. (Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, Deerfield, MA)*

The partnership with the Armstrong County Area Agency on Aging was especially productive. Not only did all of the senior centers host events but they also volunteered by placing labels on books and guides. Without the Armstrong County Community Foundation, this would not have been possible. They provided not only the matching funds but also helped with publicity and provided their Americorp members for planning and organizing events. (Kittanning Public Library, Kittaning, PA)

Festivals, Film Series, and Performance Groups. Performance series or groups often added Big Read events to their activities and schedules, marketing the program to wider areas and taking events to diverse audiences.

Our work with partner Authentic Community Theatre reached the adult reader as well as the middle-school level student. The theatre company developed an a high quality, original vignette surrounding the life of Harper Lee, complete with music composed specifically for The Big Read in Washington County. This performance was then shared with middle-school performing arts classes in order to start dialogue about the book, and how it may have been written differently today. (Community Foundation of Washington County MD, Hagerstown)

The Arts Array is a cultural film series sponsored by the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center and four local colleges and is open to participants from the community as well as the colleges. A showing of Francois Truffaut's film adaptation of Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451 *offered free books, popcorn, and beverages for participants. This partnership encouraged more members of the community and many college students to attend… the event was standing room only, with over 150 people of all ages attending the film. (Barter Theatre, Abingdon, VA)*

Local Businesses. Although grantees do not record the numbers of private sector partners or sponsors, narrative reports and open-ended survey responses suggest that businesses were key partners, especially for promotion. Local businesses displaying Big Read materials and free books included grocery stores, cafes, laundromats, doctor's offices, hair salons, barbershops, and discount retailers. Some corporate sponsors promoted events through their own brochures, fliers, and newsletters. National booksellers such as Borders and Barnes & Noble were often active partners, as were hundreds of local independent booksellers and coffee shops. Bookstores hosted events, had booths at other events, publicized The Big Read, distributed Reader's Guides, and set up displays of other Big Read titles or other books by Big Read authors. Some stores offered discounts, ordered books (especially hard to find editions), and organized and promoted story times and other children's events.

BORDERS Books was very receptive to The Big Read, offering to host us in eight major stores on four islands during the month of October. This involved placing banners, posters, bookmarks and reader's guides at all major locations in addition to featuring several prominent window displays…. Staffers …offered a cultural events/Joy Luck Club day, featuring Chinese music, calligraphy, tai chi, feng shui, Chinese astrology, authors and an abbreviated performance. All of Amy Tan's books were offered at a twenty percent discount. Read to Me International hosted a children's hour in all BORDERS stores featuring Grandfather's Journey, *with related immigration and cross-cultural themes. (Hawai'i Capital Cultural District, Honolulu, HI)*

Municipal Organizations. City agencies and government officials supported The Big Read in their formal roles, and also in some creative, unexpected ways. City councils and mayors made proclamations, and tribal elders promoted the program, as did Chambers of Commerce, Tourism and Visitors or Conventions Bureaus. Buses and bus stops displayed advertising, and public transportation published brochures for events with bus routes to them. Fire departments made fire trucks available for *Fahrenheit 451* events, which often featured firefighters reading the book. Utilities companies included the mayor's thoughts on The Big Read and event information in a newsletter included in monthly utility bills. In one city, a recreation brochure, mailed to 49,000 households, helped attract youth and seniors.

The mayors of both St. Petersburg and Clearwater, FL proclaimed October as The Big Read month, and the value of these mayoral proclamations should not, said The Big Read Coordinator, be underestimated. More than ceremonial gestures or stamps of approval, these proclamations signified the city's commitment to read the book and participate in activities—and issued an invitation to citizens to do the same. They essentially said: "this is important, let's do this as a community." The Big Read Coordinator added that, "once one city came to us with the idea, the other city wanted to do it…then the school systems." Another official endorsement, less formal but very public, came from a county commissioner who asked to be pictured on a billboard reading The Great Gatsby. *After some finagling to get permission from Scribner's to reproduce the cover image, the billboard went up alongside a major thoroughfare, promoting The Big Read to morning and evening commuters and other drivers. (Pinellas, FL)*

Military Bases. Some sites had formal partnerships with military bases, and others with bases nearby included them in their Big Read efforts. In both cases, grantees found enthusiastic base librarians and enlistees and families interested in events and book discussions. In both cases, grantees also found that gaining access to military bases can be complicated, sometimes requiring extensive screening and clearance through a chain of command. In final reports and interviews, grantees who partnered with bases said they were eager to continue the relationship and confident that a better understanding of public access to base resources would strengthen future efforts.

Schools. Feedback from Phase 1 grantees indicated that partnerships with schools were their most productive partnerships or, and much less frequently, the most disappointing aspect of The Big Read. Challenges included the tight timeline between being notified of receiving the grant and implementing The Big Read, getting in sync with the instructional planning schedule and reading

lists, finding a place for The Big Read in an already "packed" curriculum, fitting the program into the state's high-stakes testing timeframe, and finding the right contacts. Grantees also identified several benefits of partnering with schools for The Big Read, such as increased attendance of youth and their family members at events, free, word-of-mouth promotion of the book and events to friends and family, increased visibility of the grantee organization among youth, families, teachers, and schools, and long-term partnerships with schools and teachers for future initiatives. (See Section 15, p. 119 for further discussion of participation by schools and school-age audiences.)

Perceived Successes and Effective Strategies for Forming and Sustaining Partnerships

In analyzing quantitative data, we looked at several ways to buttress reports of perceived success with objective measures. For example, we looked at the relationships between the number of partner organizations and grantees' ratings of success. Correlation analyses did suggest that there was an association, beyond what would be expected to occur simply by chance, between number of partners and capacity to attract audiences: those grantees with seven or more partners reported higher rates of success in attracting *diverse* audiences. (See also Part Two, p. 85.)

We also explored indices based on numbers of events, attendees, and survey ratings; we also looked at models that compared inputs (funding, partners, etc.) and outputs to see whether certain implementations or partnerships used funds more efficiently or effectively (see p. 62). We concluded that, given the variance among sites, creating an index of success based on quantitative data is likely to be meaningless. Because of the variations in the magnitude of activities and variation in implementation strategies, each Big Read's success must be locally defined. We have therefore reported survey data, such as the ratings on partnerships discussed below, with the caveats that response rates varied and grantees may assess their programs subjectively, and incorporated a range of grantee voices from the qualitative data to add detail to survey findings.

Survey ratings indicate that a large majority of respondents—over two-thirds overall—considered their Big Read partnerships to be very successful, and another fifth, moderately so. No one rated partnerships as unsuccessful, and means for each cycle, on a 4-point scale, were 3.5 or higher (See Table 15.)

Table 15. Grantees' Ratings of the Success of Partnerships

		Somewhat successful	Moderately successful	Very successful	Mean*	SD
Success of partnerships formed for The Big Read	P1C1 (n=71)	5.71%	22.9%	71.4%	3.7	0.6
	P1C2 (n=149)	13.3%	20.5%	66.2%	3.5	2.0
	P2C1 (n=41)	4.9%	14.6%	80.5%	3.8	0.5
	Overall (N=266)	**9.8%**	**20.3%**	**69.6%**	**3.6**	**0.7**

Source: Grantee Online Survey
*Means based on a 4-point scale where 1=not all successful and 4=very successful.

In what may be a more important indicator of perceived success—and sustainability—almost all of the survey respondents also said that partnerships would "very likely" (53%) or "likely" (36%) lead to future collaborations. (See Table 16. Section 10 on p. 80 further discusses the ways Big Read partnerships solidified relationships with local organizations and laid the groundwork for future collaboration.)

Table 16. Grantees' Ratings of the Sustainability of Partnerships

		Unlikely	Likely	Very likely	Mean*	Std Dev.
How likely is it that The Big Read partnerships will lead to other collaborations in literature and the arts?	P1C1 (n=71)	4.2%	38.0%	56.3%	2.4	0.6
	P1C2 (n=149)	4.0%	42.3%	53.7%	2.4	0.7
	P2C1 (n=41)	0%	43.9%	56.1%	2.4	0.7
	Overall (N=266)	**11.4%**	**35.6%**	**53.0%**	**2.4**	**0.7**

Source: Grantee Online Survey
*Means based on a 3-point scale, where 1=unlikely and 3=very likely.

The examples of partner activities summarized above indicate that a perception of success was influenced by a shared commitment on the part of grantees and partners to the mission of The Big Read, and the willingness to step out of traditional roles and host and promote the program in creative, unconventional ways. Reflecting on what worked in recruiting partners and sustaining partnerships, grantees shared some advice and strategies for successful partnerships, including:

- **Start early and cast a wide net**. Grantees who started early felt it paid off, and those who did not planned to do so in subsequent Big Reads. One grantee noted that "the best advice" was: "…to be open to even the most unlikely of partners…bring together as many names, faces and ideas as possible to begin generating interest and support for the project early on" (Community Foundation of Washington County, MD). Grantees found that having key or prominent partners, or a critical mass of partners, marshaled early on, was a real "selling point," giving The Big Read a local identity and momentum and allowing them to attract more partners and sponsors along the way. Grantees who discovered roadblocks to successful alliances too late to address them noted that an earlier start could have prevented problems.

- **Provide key information and maintain regular communication**. Grantees often stressed the value of information and steady communication. Those who held Big Reads in later cycles, armed with all the resource materials, found them very effective in attracting the support of partners. Those who had not yet received some materials regretted their absence.[20] Grantees often used the Reader's Guide as a promotional or recruiting tool; some also shared the NEA's *Reading at Risk* and *Arts and Civic Engagement* summaries, and found them helpful in getting partners on board.

[20] The adjustment of the granting cycle from six months to one year addressed timing issues and gave grantees more time to gain support and circulate materials and information.

- **Find the right contacts**. Whether working with schools or other organizations, grantees found that having the right contacts yielded better and faster results. They noted that working through "curriculum specialists and school librarians, who in turn, connected with local teachers," facilitated school partnerships. In at least one case, the library worked with "an independent PR consultant who volunteered his time to get the right names and numbers to contact," which proved key to "getting business partners and the media to participate."

- **Define roles and relationships.** Grantees configured partnerships differently, but agreed that it was important to clarify roles earlier rather than later. The scope of the project, familiarity with it, the history of the partners, available resources—helped determine appropriate roles. In cases where partners had a history of working together, a loose confederation seemed to work well; when it did not, staff shortages or an excess of partners seemed to be the source of problems. Larger Big Reads, like Hawai'i's statewide program or Charleston's widespread efforts, required a more clearly defined management structure and templates or guidelines for enlisting sponsorship:

  …The Big Read Hawai'i grant partnership (Office of the Governor, the Hawai'i Capital Cultural District, the Hawai'i Council for the Humanities, the Manoa Foundation, the Hawai'i State Public Library System, and the Department of Education) was unique in that many of the organizations had not worked together prior to this initiative. The leadership, expertise, and broad scope of the varied groups informed a more far reaching approach as we developed our programs….By its very nature our Big Read called for bringing on a project manager and a marketing/communications person. (Hawai'I Capital Cultural District, Honolulu, HI)

  A sponsorship proposal was created to approach the media and businesses with clear definitions of The Big Read campaign, how they could get involved and how their participation would be recognized in various publications, promotions, advertising and displays. All together, more than 40 sponsors and partners were secured with total local donations valued in excess of $200,000 through cash, in-kind contributions and the ad value of media coverage and publicity. (Charleston County Public Library, Charleston, SC)

Other grantees found that a formal agreement cemented relationships, preempted confusion about roles, time, staff, and resources, and ensured that interest translated into commitment.

Realizing that this project is almost always greeted with great excitement and interest, we now know that sometimes well-intentioned partners will commit to the project even though they are unable to dedicate the necessary resources. Based on this, we would strongly suggest that memoranda of understanding are jointly created and signed by all parties to specifically document the amount of time, staff, and other resources that will be dedicated. (Columbia University, New York, NY)

- **Foster ownership and creativity.** For some grantees, defining roles meant letting go or delegating responsibilities to allow partners to exercise creativity and own The Big Read. Some, like Adams State College, successfully used a laissez-faire approach: Others, like Harris County, Texas, concluded that structure and steady communication were vital in the early stages, but as activities moved forward, it was equally critical that partners "assume ownership of the project and feel vested in it," which allowed creative, new ideas for promotion and programming to flourish.

Our strategy was to approach organizations that had a vested interest in promoting reading. We encouraged these groups to develop and contribute their own programming ideas. Libraries initiated their own book clubs and film series. Schools incorporated the book into their curriculum and created events within their schools. (Adams State College, Alamosa, CO)

In her early planning meetings with potential partners, the coordinator of the Harris County, Texas Big Read said she spent a lot of time educating others about the national Big Read program. Once informed, partners were hooked, and contributed in effective and sometimes surprising ways: Metro, the city's public transportation system, created buttons, Big Read fortune cookies, and bilingual pamphlets listing Big Read events with a transit map highlighting bus routes to those events. The local PBS station drew in young children and their parents through promoting Sagwa, the television series based on Amy Tan's children's book Sagwa, the Chinese Siamese Cat. They provided materials and training to any elementary school librarians who were interested. Eager to participate in The Big Read and the city's International Festival, many took them up on the offer.

SECTION 4: PROMOTION, MEDIA COVERAGE, AND PROGRAM RESOURCES

What promotional activities and resources were most effective in engaging audiences?

When asked how The Big Read differed from previous community reading efforts, grantees were quick to answer, "Promotion." Describing promotion for previous efforts, one grantee said, "Although we held our own Big Read for several years prior to getting the grant, our promotion was so limited that many community members did not realize it was happening!" The Big Read funding and NEA-produced resources enabled grantees to "get the word out…in new ways and with much greater effect" and "reach patrons in ways not tried before.

Arts Midwest data show newspaper, radio, and television outlets reported by state to range from two outlets in some states to over 70 in others. Grantees' and media partners' efforts are also reflected in the millions of reported media impressions—or the potential audiences for the ads and public service announcements run by local TV and radio stations.

Early Promotion and Media Involvement

According to grantees, early promotion was vital. Like forming partnerships, if grantees did not start early the first time around, they vowed to do so the second. Creating momentum that could be leveraged once events got underway, early promotion created a buzz about the program, piqued interest, brought partners up to speed, won the support of additional business or government groups, and drew interest and contributions from community members, such as graphic artists, who offered services pro bono. Pre-programming promotion gave community members time to read the book and allowed free books and read-and-release copies to circulate. Advance notice gave schools and book clubs more time to incorporate The Big Read book into planned activities.

Early promotion took many forms: as noted in the previous section, grantees announced the program in utility bills and through email blasts. Many did some "hand-selling" at local events such as theatre performances or festivals, such as the Santa Fe Fiesta, the West Virginia Book Faire and Apple Harvest Parade, and the First Amendment Film Festival, during which the Golden Isles Arts and Humanities Association in Brunswick, Georgia, began promoting *Fahrenheit 451*. In Attleboro, Massachusetts, grantees ran a contest with serialized clues inviting readers to guess the title before it was announced.

Grantees found that engaging the media early helped ensure their support throughout. Including local TV news anchors among "celebrities" for kick-off events "guaranteed at least a basic level of coverage on the local news." Bringing newspapers in at the outset produced weekly write ups, discounted advertising, and weekly calendars of events, in some cases created as a pull-out for handy reference. Some grantees who didn't build an early relationship with local newspapers found themselves explaining that events changed weekly.

Free Books

One of the most effective forms of promotion—and an effective form of early promotion—was free books. Adults and seniors were as pleased as children to get reading kits; college students were glad to have a book "to add to their collection." Thirty percent of participant postcard respondents said they got their card from a book.

Grantees gave books away in a variety of ways: as part of a Big Read reading kit or book-club-in-a-bag at museum bookstores; giveaways at events, libraries, bookstores, festivals and discussion groups; and as radio station prizes for call-ins. Grantees distributed free books to schools, city council members, civic and student organizations, senior centers, juvenile detention centers, and after-school programs, even leaving some at car dealerships, Harley Davidson stores, and bars. For some grantees, the offer of free books was an effective way to reach non-traditional audiences: For one grantee, "…it helped overcome economic barriers of a working class community. We even had participation from the homeless community…because we were able to give out free book and CD's." For another, free books "helped us get non-reluctant readers. Purchasing the books in Spanish helped with non-native speakers." Books to homeless or domestic abuse shelters were well received as were those distributed to the jails and juvenile detention centers. Grantees also reported that GED and ELL classes "quickly claimed" free books and translations.

NEA Resources

In all three cycles, grantees acknowledged the value and high quality of the NEA-produced materials, PSAs banners, posters, bookmarks, and web materials, which "made the task of promotion easier," and the advertising "recognizable and consistent."

Feedback from grantees also indicated that the instructional resources like the Reader's, Teacher's, and Audio Guides became in effect promotional materials. They added to the "wealth of information" grantees could provide, and worked as well for Rotary and Kiwanis groups as they did for library patrons, schools, and discussion groups. Being able to capture a potential participant's attention by handing them something "right on the spot" was effective.

Grantees distributed resources in a number of ways. Grantees distributed Reader's Guides widely, sometimes with stickers containing local contact information. The Georgia O'Keefe Museum reported that they "offered tourists the Reader's Guides and they loved them!" and added that the book itself *(Bless Me, Ultima*) was also "popular in our shop with visitors." Audio Guides were given away to "schools, bookstores and restaurants but also awarded as popular door prizes." Posters were placed in bookstores, restaurants, local businesses and community centers, as were bookmarks, which were also tucked into "patrons" bags as they checked items out of the library." Grantees often added stickers or created their own bookmarks: one locally created bookmark read

"If you liked *Their Eyes Were Watching God*…" and listed other Harlem Renaissance authors and other recent African-American authors. Patrons took them up on the offer: one patron systematically found and checked out all the titles. The power of one book and the endorsement of the library seemed to convince readers to venture further.

Grantee survey respondents gave high ratings to all resources, with means at 3 or above on a (on a 4-point scale, in which 1=inadequate and 4=excellent). The Reader's Guide received the highest ratings: which 91.4% of the grantees rated as good or excellent (M=3.6). The Teacher's Guides, Audio Guides, and posters and bookmarks were well received, as was the support from Arts Midwest. (See Table 17.)

Table 17. Grantee Ratings of Materials and Resources

Resource	% Good/ Excellent	Overall Mean*	Overall Std Dev.
Reader's Guides (N=251)	91.4%	3.6	0.6
Teacher's Guides (N=233)	85.8%	3.6	0.6
Overall support from the NEA and Arts Midwest (N=230)	83.1%	3.6	0.7
NEA technical assistance (n=171)	62.8%	3.5	0.7
Banners, posters, bookmarks (N=247	84.1%	3.5	0.8
CD/Audio Guides (N=247)	84.0%	3.4	0.7
Web site (N=241)	82.7%	3.4	0.7
Organizer's Guide (N=223)	75.5%	3.4	0.7
Publicity Materials (N=175)	79.7%	3.3	0.8
Public Service Announcements (N=210)	63.0%	3.2	0.9
Other Big Read community web sites (N=152)	48.7%	3.0	0.7

Source**:** Grantee Survey
*Means calculated on a 4-pt. Scale where 1=inadequate and 4=excellent

Approximately three-fourths of the participant survey respondents (N=2651) indicated that they used the Reader's Guides, and over three-fourths (79.5%) rated them good or excellent. Somewhat fewer respondents used the Audio Guides (60.4%), but a similar percentage (73.6%). gave them high ratings. Over one-fourth (28,0%) of the respondents used The Big Read web site, and close to 70% assigned ratings of good or excellent.

Public Service Announcements

PSA ratings were somewhat lower than for other NEA-created materials, but still almost two-thirds (63.0%) of the grantees responding to the survey rated them as good or excellent. Of the 158 responding to the item asking whether they ran the PSA on their local TV station, just over half (56.3%) said "yes." Similar numbers, 54.7%, said they ran a PSA on their local radio station. Feedback from repeat grantees who completed surveys or participated in Phase 2 case studies indicated that shorter PSAs—cut from sixty to thirty seconds when evaluation feedback showed that TV stations were reluctant to run the longer ads—were more marketable and useful.

Grantees praised the production quality and visual appeal of the PSAs, noting that the caliber of the ads lent "credibility" to their Big Read. One grantee said the PSA "Encouraged viewers to take our program seriously…[and] showed that the Big Read is a nationwide event, and people like to be a part of something big. It validated our program as something important for our community." Another wrote: "The PSA was great! People who saw it loved it. Its high energy made you want to run out to a bookstore, buy the book, sit down in the store and start reading it."

A range of media outlets aired the PSAs: network affiliates, cable TV and public access stations, public radio and television stations, military base TV, and a State Public Affairs Television and Streaming Network. Some outlets ran PSAs in prime-time slots, some in less crowded overnight airtime; some local cable stations ran a Big Read crawl throughout the month. Over a fourth (29.42%) of the grantee survey respondents (N=250) ran the PSA on their website. Grantees also found creative ways other than broadcast to use the PSAs. These included downloading the PSA to YouTube, posting it on their Big Read Web site or a library Web site, running it on a loop in prominent library location, airing it as part of the library's public access TV show, showing it in high school cafeterias or hallways, and using it a special events, "either as a group showing or running before a scheduled event" or "at the beginning of our film festival."

Local Promotion

A local identity, created through a custom-made PSA, photographs of recognizable figures, or a repeated contact name, often seemed as important as national branding. This local cue seemed particularly important for radio promotion: a familiar name or voice helped grantees win radio time—often weekly radio spots—and a listening audience. Just under two-thirds (61.6%) of the survey respondents (N=250) used their organization's web site or created a Big Read site, many of which included a blog, forum, or chat feature. Grantees also produced their own brochures (in one case using the American Library Association's "READ" software), bookmarks, and publicity packets. Of the 161 grantee survey respondents providing

Providing local contact information in their promotions and materials was important for Pinellas. For the most part…organizers and partners were very pleased with and made good use of the high-quality, ready-made NEA resources, especially the Teacher's Guides, and the Reader's Guides, 20,000 of which were distributed around the county. Having the resources in hand allowed the PPLC to divert funds to programming and additional promotion. Their only complaint was that, as important as the national branding was, materials they could customize with local branding and information would have been preferable. This was true of the PSA, as well as the posters and bookmarks. The St. Petersburg PBS channels ran the PSAs, along with footage of the proclamations, the Kick-Off event, and other special events and programs, but some local TV and radio stations chose not to run them. Pinellas created some of their own ads, posters, and bookmarks, to make sure community members had contact names, phone numbers, event details, website addresses, and any other key information that would bring them to events. (Pinellas, FL)

information, 38.5% (n=62) said they produced a local PSA; of those, just over a third, 33.5% (n=54), ran it on their web site; 54.1% (n=87) ran it on their local TV station, and 62.4% (n=46) ran it on a local radio station.

Promotion and Outreach to Targeted Audiences

In addition to traditional outlets, several grantees created special packets and employed different marketing strategies for targeted audiences. Several sites sent mailings to nursing homes and senior centers. The Knoxville, Tennessee YWCA "reached out to teenage boys by gearing some advertising toward them (photos of skaters reading the novel)," and created similar ads for other populations of reluctant readers. Others used alternative rock radio stations to target young adolescent males

Several sites, as noted above, enhanced their own grassroots efforts by promoting through web sites, listservs, and blogs, and several noted high levels of daily traffic. Others used popular social networking sites such as Friendster and MySpace.

Non-Media Promoters

All grantees reported creative promotion through non-media partners that included hair salons, hospitals, service clubs, and educators. Barter Theatre actors in Abingdon, Virginia, who "have celebrity and were able to gain the attention of the public" went door-to-door to give local businesses Reader's guides, posters, CD's, and bookmarks. East Baton Rouge, Louisiana "had an especially terrific relationship with the Fire Fighters as well as our favorite media outlets, who embraced the project and truly helped us deliver a fabulous promotional package. The Fire Fighter's Calendar was a coveted prize." Others described successful grassroots promotional efforts:

> *We used our local librarians to communicate with the Western Mass. Library Association members, increasing our ability to involve libraries. We reached a lot of teachers through our public television station's partnership (they have 5,000 names on their e-mail list for professional development--they sent out several illustrated e-mail fliers). The Local Literacy Project, a Reinventing Justice project connected us to some troubled youth. A local church observed Reformation Sunday with a church-wide read (Both John Tyndale's and Martin Luther's translation of the Bible had been burned so there was good tie-in.) (Pocumtuk Valley Memorial Association, Deerfield, MA)*

Differences in How Grantees with Limited and Bountiful Media Outlets Promote a Big Read

Lack of Media Markets

In smaller areas a shortage of media outlets made Big Read promotion a challenge. In Burlington County, New Jersey, The Boy Scout Council found "no real media market" because most of the area is served by Philadelphia newspapers and television and radio stations—a hard market to interest in a small-town Big Read. Lincoln, County, Montana, faced a similar challenge.

> *There are no daily local newspapers; most only publish once a week. The four newspapers were very generous in providing the libraries with space for press releases and articles. Unfortunately due to the competition for space, the original articles were often edited. Most often the crediting information for The Big Read was removed, leaving only the basics of the featured event.*

Lincoln County did find a "helpful media outlet" in the local radio station, where announcers "found time to promote each event through on air announcements, usually the day before and the day of each event." Faced with "the lack of traditional media," Salem County, New Jersey:

> *…used mailings, flyers, posters, email, and public speaking extensively throughout the duration of the Big Read program. We also staffed exhibits at the Salem County Fair, the Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Forum, an Over 55 Health and Wellness Fair sponsored by the Memorial Hospital of Salem County, and other community events. Well over half of the county's population attends the County Fair and the Economic Development Forum includes the majority of our business and government leaders. This helped us to attract the entire community to attend our events.*

Competition in Media Markets

For other sites, the issue was not lean media markets but competition that left them vying for media attention. For some, the challenge was the high volume of other arts events, which meant they were competing not just for media attention but also for audiences. In Bloomington, Indiana, a medium-sized community, the Arts Council found that an area home to a large university and a thriving arts community did not leave many slots in the city calendar for The Big Read. Arlington Cultural Affairs in northern Virginia described a similarly saturated arts calendar in a larger urban area:

> *We experienced low attendance at some events, which we felt was due to competition with the many other free, high-quality cultural offerings within Arlington and the greater DC area, and the related difficulty of attracting media attention in a busy, urban setting.*

Arlington also found, however, that the cachet of The Big Read gave them an edge over competitors:

We developed a marketing team and expanded our marketing and promotion efforts. We found that the program's association with the NEA helped us attract more media attention to advertise the program…for example, The Washington Post *covered some of The Big Read programs but has not covered other community-wide reading programs in the past.*

Value of In-Kind Media Contributions

Compared to limited or saturated markets described above, the following excerpt from the Charleston County South Carolina Public Library's report narrative shows the value—calculated as in-kind contributions—of a rich, receptive media market:

All together, more than 40 sponsors and partners were secured with total local donations valued in excess of $200,000 through cash, in-kind contributions and the ad value of media coverage and publicity.

WCSC-TV 5 (CBS) – The number one station in the market embraced The Big Read, with commitments from the General Manager, News Director, Promotions Department and key anchors and reporters. The station produced and aired a local Big Read Public Service Announcement featuring one of the station's anchors. Additionally, the station ran numerous news stories, did on-set interviews to promote events, aired on-location live news stories, featured events on its Web site and involved anchors to do programs and MC a key Finale event.

- **Value**: $37,175 if the Library had to purchase advertising equal to the airtime committed to The Big Read. This doesn't include the time and involvement of the station's management in helping to plan out a campaign strategy or the station's anchors that attended and hosted events.

The Post and Courier – The local daily newspaper provided a key campaign sponsorship plus provided invaluable print and online promotional and news coverage. The newspaper did several things, including: printing 50,000 copies of The Big Read Program Guide at cost; providing $5,000 of free advertising space that the Library could use as desired; providing $2,000 toward purchasing The Big Read book; and posting the entire book *Their Eyes Were Watching God* on its Web site in five-installments over the five-week campaign. Dozens of stories ran in print and on-line to promote programs as part of different calendars in multiple sections of the paper and nearly every day of the week.

- **Value** - $110,951 if the Library had to purchase advertising equal to the space dedicated to print and online stories and had to pay full price for printing the 50,000 copies of The Big Read Program Guide. This total includes: $33,464 for print stories/donated advertising; $40,300 for online stories/posting and serialization of Big Read book online; $35,187 for printing the Program Guide, of which the Library paid $2,500; and $2,000 donated for purchasing book for distribution.

Some of our more unique and effective partnerships included:

Jonathan Green Studios – a world-renown artist from Florida who grew up in the Lowcountry of South Carolina uses his upbringing as the focal point of his art. Green donated full use of one of his images as the signature piece of the campaign. It was used on the Program Guide, posters, bus signs, programs, postcards, display boards, T-shirts, convenience store signs and as the key signature for all publicity. A big fan of Zora Neale Hurston, Green also came to Charleston (at no cost to the Library) to do a program about his own Gullah heritage and how it relates to his art. Big Read posters and T-shirts with his image were sold, and he signed posters and books at the event and signed extra posters for the Friend of the Library to sell.

- **Value**: $47,000 for use of his image on T-Shirts, posters (sold by the Friends of the Library) and use of the image for all Big Read promotions and publicity plus his appearance as a keynote speaker.

The Visitors Network – This sponsor produced and aired a five-minute segment about The Big Read through its series of media outlets, including 136,000 households on two cable services and 2,500 hotel rooms, and on its Web site. The hour-long show aired multiple times daily for four weeks and was used to promote events, businesses and services in the community. Additionally, the show's owner donated all costs associated with a Big Read reception held 10/19/07 at a historic home along the river with live music. The Library elected to use the reception at the end of the campaign as a way to thank sponsors, partners and staff members for their efforts.

- **Value** - $28,000 if the Library produced and aired a similar segment reaching such a wide audience along with the reception costs that included site rental, catering, tents, band, etc.

Charleston County Public Library, Charleston , SC

Part Two

PARTICIPATION AND PROGRAMMING

Overview

Results reported in Part One indicate Big Read attendance figures close to a million and a half, at events and book discussions totaling almost 16,000. Double counting and reporting irregularities aside, this was a big, fluid audience. One of the biggest challenges of the study was gathering sufficient data from a representative sample of audiences and events to answer key research questions: “Who is participating in The Big Read?” “How do they hear about it?” “What outreach and events are most successful? “What impact does the program have on literary reading and public participation in the arts?”

The rationale for using multiple data collection tools was to capture information from a cross-section of participants wherever they took part in The Big Read—in classrooms or coffee shops, at museums, YMCAs, or branch libraries in Hispanic neighborhoods. This approach did not make determining who was participating an exact science: it was still likely that some participants completed multiple forms, that grantees distributed more surveys at events that lent themselves to data collection, and that new patrons, reluctant readers, or non-native speakers completed instruments less often than avid readers more accustomed to certain venues.

Methodology

To account for respondent-overlap and instrument-effect issues, we have reported results by instrument and looked at trends or confirmations of findings across instruments and cycles. This takes into account how instruments were distributed—for example, hard copies were made available during the third cycle or Phase 2, which may have resulted in a more diverse audience than those solicited through the online survey in the first two cycles. Postcards were intended to end up in some non-traditional venues—rail stations, laundromats, waiting rooms—but that may mean that the postcard respondent group is composed differently. Because it was more convenient, event cards may have been distributed more frequently at book discussions than at other events—e.g., festivals, or film screenings—which, again, could indicate that the event respondent group skews toward those likely to attend book discussions or belong to book groups.

We have also compared our respondent group to the U.S. population, and, in assessing reading habits, to the population for the 2002 Study of Public Participation in the Arts, the basis for the NEA’s *Reading at Risk* report. Because that report noted steeper declines in reading among young adults aged 18-24, we have broken figures down for that group wherever appropriate. (Part Five, p. 112, further discusses participation and reading habits among teens and young adults.) In one instance where we had a high response rate, we have compared The Big Read population to

the community population. We have also analyzed grantees' narrative and survey assessments of successful programming and successful efforts to reach out to new and diverse audiences—all to present as full a picture as possible of Big Read participation.

Demographic findings are based on data from three instruments completed by participants—postcards and event cards distributed in the first two cycles and participant surveys used in all three. Table 18 shows overall responses by cycle and sites represented. Numbers of responses by site vary considerably—for the postcards, from 1 to 80; for the event cards, 1 to 533; and for the participant surveys, 1 to 137. Tables 19 through 21 show ranges in responses by instrument and cycle. (See Appendix B, p. 184 for responses by site and state.)

Table 18. Number of Responses by Instrument, Site, and Cycle

	Postcards	Sites Represented	Event Cards	Sites Represented	Participant Survey	Sites Represented
P1C1	998	59 (81.9%)	3.570	35 (48.6%)	732	62 (86.1%)
P1C2	2,338	111 (94.9%)	6.954	86 (73.5%)	961	103 (88.0%)
P2C1	NA	NA	NA	NA	1,883	99 (78.6%)
Missing Codes	0		0		60	
TOTAL	3,336	170 (89.9%)	10,524	121 (64.0%)	3,636	264 (83.8%)

Table 19. Post Card Responses—Range per Site, per Cycle (None distributed In P2C1)

Cycle	0	1-9	10-19	20-49	50-100	Total Number of Sites
P1C1	13	24	20	11	4	72
P1C2	6	46	17	38	10	117

Table 20. Event Card Responses—Range per Site, per Cycle (None distributed In P2C1)

Cycle	0	1-9	10-19	20-49	50-100	100+	Total Number of Sites
P1C1	37	4	4	6	8	13	72
P1C2	31	29	7	11	12	27	117

Table 21. Participant Survey Responses—Range per Site, per Cycle

Cycle	0	1-9	10-19	20-49	50-100	100+	Total Number of Sites
P1C1	12	36	12	10	2	0	72
P1C2	13	85	12	6	1	0	117
P2C1	27	56	15	13	13	2	126

Key Findings, Part Two

- The typical Big Read participant is female, 45 or older, white, better educated, and a more avid reader than the average American adult. Gender representation among teens and young adults also shows more females participating (or completing surveys).

    - Efforts to boost participation by younger audiences, or efforts to distribute surveys to a wider audience, resulted in some shifts: in Phase 2, 17.5% of the participant surveys were under 18, compared to 5.2% in Phase 1. Percentages of 18-24 year olds were also higher, 14.3% compared to 6.6%.

- Approximately three-fourths of the participant survey respondents, overall, were white; 13.3% were African American, 6.3% were Hispanic, 3.2% American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, or Asian.

    - Breakdowns by cycle and Phase show slightly different representations. In P1C2 there was a marked increase in Hispanics participating in the program (13.4%). Lower numbers of Hispanics in P1C1 meant that, overall, participation by Hispanics decreased from Phase 1 to Phase 2 (7.5% to 5.6%). Participation by African Americans was similar in the first two cycles (7.4% and 7.6%, respectively). In P2C1, there was a large increase in participation by African Americans, to 19.0%.

    - The overall percentage of white Big Read participants (77.1%) is higher than the 2006 U.S. Census figure (66.4% for white, non-Hispanics). The Phase 2 participation for African-Americans (19.0%) is greater than the 2006 Census figure; overall percentages—13.3% compared to 12.8%—are similar. Except in P1C2, Hispanics are under-represented in The Big Read population.

- Big Read participants are also avid readers. Compared to the SPPA population, 57.6% of whom reported reading a book in the last 12 months, 85.5% of The Big Read participants under 18, 83.0% of those 18-24, and 92.2% of the overall Big Read audience had done so. Again, there were some shifts in P2C1, with greater participation by teens and young adults who were less avid readers. Still, they read more than the SPPA population.

- Participants hear about The Big Read from a library, word-of-mouth, and at Big Read events. Among media outlets, newspapers appear to be an effective tool. Younger audiences and post-card respondent indicate that younger audiences have a greater range of resources they turn to form information, and that books and cards found their way to a variety of places: theatre events, fairs, read-a-thons.

- Grantees considered most events successful, with theatrical events and family community events, and talks garnering the highest ratings. Many Big Read events took place onsite at grantee or partner venues—libraries, museums, literary centers—but grantees also found that taking events out into the community proved successful. Exhibits and book discussions had lower ratings, but grantees learned that making book discussions less formal and holding them non-traditional venues could help them attract audiences beyond those who belong to existing book clubs.

- Grantees targeted a range of participants and reported at least partial success with all. They rated their success with regular patrons highest, followed by teachers and students in class and seniors; they reported the least success with reluctant readers, non-native speakers, and other underserved audiences.

- Other data indicate that grantees' efforts to engage hard-to-reach audiences were often extensive even though they considered their success modest. As part of new outreach, grantees expanded programming, formed new partnerships, and took events to new audiences and areas not always accommodated by or drawn to arts and literary institutions. These audiences included incarcerated populations, children, Latino audiences, and non-native speakers.

- The data also seem to suggest that more and more grantees are using the arts as a way to reach non- or reluctant-readers, not only through the theatrical events described earlier, but also with design and craft activities, art contests, storytelling, and music—all intended to offer different entrees into the themes of The Big Read books.

SECTION 5: PARTICIPATION PROFILE

Who is participating in The Big Read?

The profile of Big Read participants is based on data from all three cycles and all three instruments, which included questions about gender, age, and level of schooling. Table 22 shows the breakdowns by instrument and demographic category. Because approximately half of the participant surveys came from Phase 1, or the first two cycles combined, and half from Phase 2, during which outreach to schools and teenage audiences was emphasized and surveys were made available on paper as well as online, Table 22 also breaks the data down by phase. Only the participant survey collected race and ethnicity data, reported on pp. 44-46 below.

Table 22. Big Read Participant Demographic Profile

DEMOGRAPHIC CATEGORIES	POSTCARDS		EVENT CARDS		PARTICIPANT SURVEYS		Participant Surveys, Phase 1 (P1C1, P1C2)		Participant Surveys, Phase 2 (P2C1)	
Gender	**Number**	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**
Male	804	25.0	2,438	24.7	769	22.6	219	18.5	550	24.8
Female	2,414	75.0	7,446	75.3	2,637	77.4	967	81.5	1,670	75.2
Total*	**3,218**	**100.0**	**9,884**	**100.0**	**3,406**	**100.0**	1,186	100.0	2,220	100.0
Age	**Number**	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**
Under 18	417	12.6	1498	14.8	454	13.2	62	5.2	392	17.5
18-24	160	4.9	593	5.9	398	11.6	78	6.6	320	14.3
25-34	226	6.9	573	5.7	301	8.8	133	11.2	168	7.5
35-44	373	11.3	861	8.5	424	12.4	184	15.5	240	10.7
45-54	517	15.7	1,554	15.4	607	17.7	258	21.7	349	15.6
55-64	746	22.6	2,304	22.8	686	20.0	282	23.7	404	18.0
65-74	497	15.0	1,678	16.6	379	11.1	134	11.3	245	10.9
75 and over	365	11.0	1,031	10.2	180	5.3	57	4.8	123	5.5
Total*	**3,301**	**100.0**	**10,093**	**99.9**	**3,429**	**100.1**	1,188	100.0	2,241	100.0
Schooling	**Number**	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**
Less than 9th grade	166	5.2	548	5.6	200	6.0	63	5.3	137	6.4
Some high school	282	8.8	870	8.9	297	8.9	44	3.7	253	11.8
High school grad	237	7.4	837	8.5	178	5.3	40	3.4	138	6.4
Some college	657	20.5	1,938	19.8	705	21.1	224	18.8	481	22.4
College graduate	952	29.6	2,694	27.5	787	23.6	315	26.5	472	22.0
Advanced degree	916	28.5	2,910	29.7	1,167	35.0	504	42.4	663	30.9
Total*	**3,380**	**100.0**	**9,797**	**100.0**	**3,334**	**99.9**	1,190	100.1	2,144	99.9

*Not all respondents answered all questions, so totals vary across instruments. Rounding may result in percent totals just over or under 100.

Demographic Breakdown

The data suggest that the typical Big Read participant is female, 45 or older, white, and better educated and a more avid reader than the average American adult, based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau and the 2002 Study of Public Participation in the Arts.

Gender

Data from all instruments indicate that Big Read respondents are heavily skewed toward females. Data were similar across instruments, showing a three to one ratio of females to males: postcard and event card ratios are 75 to 25 percent; participant survey ratios, 77 to 23 percent. An examination by phase shows that the skew toward females was greater in Phase 1 than in Phase 2.

Gender representation among teen and young adult audiences also shows more females than males. The difference was most marked in the event cards for respondents under 18 and for those aged 18-24. The gap closed somewhat in both postcard and survey responses from the younger, under-18 group, down to a 12-18 percentage-point difference—perhaps reflecting the wider distribution of postcards in Phase 1 and paper surveys in Phase 2. Participant survey responses from 18-24 year-olds showed the same 3:1 ratio of females to males as the overall group.

Age

Data from all instruments show that participation also skews to older readers. Two-thirds of the event card and postcard respondents were over 45; half were over 55, and just over one-fourth, 65 or older. Approximately a fourth of all respondents were under 35, and an average of 13.5% were 18 or younger (postcards, 12.6%; event cards, 14.8%; surveys, 13.1%). Survey respondents were, as a group, somewhat younger than card respondents: approximately half, compared to two-thirds, were over 45; and one-third, compared to one-fourth, under 35. Phase 2 respondents as a group were younger than those in Phase 1, because of the higher percentages of respondents 24 or younger (31.8% in Phase 2 vs. 11.8% in Phase 1), likely reflecting greater participation by schools. This did not hold true for respondents in the 25-44 age group: 18.2% of the Phase 2 respondents were between 25 and 44, compared to 26.7% of the Phase 1 respondents.

The Phase 2 average (17%) for respondents 18 or younger is closer than the Phase 1 average (13.5%) to grantees' estimates for attendance by that age group (20%). Again, a younger Phase 2 population may reflect greater participation by schools. Discrepancies may be due to the fact that grantees' estimates include younger children who attended family or children's events (but most likely did not complete a card or survey). Grantees also reported that family events were among their most successful, and may have over-estimated the attendance at outdoor programs that drew large, difficult to count, crowds.

Education

Big Read participants appear to be a very well-educated group, substantially more so than the U.S. population as a whole. Just over three-fourths of event card, postcard, and survey respondents had at least some college—compared to about 50% for the U.S. population as a whole. Over half (57.2%, 58.1%, and 53.5% respectively) had completed college—about double the rate for the U.S. population; around a third (28.5%, 29.7%, and 34.5%) held advanced degrees. Other data suggest that most of the approximately 15% of respondents reporting some high school, or less than 9th grade schooling, were middle or high school students. Education

levels shifted downward somewhat in Phase 2 compared to Phase 1, with slightly more non-diploma respondents (18.2% vs. 14.9%), fewer college graduates (22.0% vs. 26.5%, and fewer respondents with advanced degrees (30.9% s. 42.4%).

Language Spoken at Home

Almost all survey respondents (97.1%) reported that they speak English at home. A small percentage (1.2%, N=42) speak Spanish. (The survey was made available in English and Spanish; only 11 respondents opted for the latter.) Languages listed by the 1.7% (N=57) checking "other" included German, Polish, Chinese, French/Creole, Portuguese, Lithuanian, and Norwegian.

Race and Ethnicity

Only the participant survey included a question about race or ethnicity. Overall percentages show that, of the approximately 3,400 participants answering the question, the majority, or three-fourths (77.1%) were white; 13.3% were African-American, and 3.2%, American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, or Asian (see Figure 6, p. 46). Following the U.S. Office of Management and Budget guidelines, The Big Read survey used a separate item asking respondents to also indicate whether their ethnicity (as opposed to race) was Hispanic or Latino. Responses suggest that the two-question approach was unclear to some participants: 19, or 0.6% of those who did not check one of the options in the first item wrote in Hispanic or Mexican-American in the "other" space. ("Other" responses also included Bahamian, Jamaican, Middle-Eastern, Yemeni, Jewish-American, mestizo, and multi-ethnic.). In response to the separate ethnicity item, 212, or 6.3% said they were Hispanic or Latino. We have used this 212 (6.3%) figure for the Hispanic population in Figure 6.

Breakdowns by cycle and Phase show slightly different representations. In P1C2, for example, there was a marked increase in Hispanics participating in the program (13.4%). Lower numbers of Hispanics in P1C1 meant that, overall, participation by Hispanics decreased from Phase 1 to Phase 2 (7.5% to 5.6%). Participation by African Americans was similar in the first two cycles (7.4% and 7.6%, respectively). In P2C1, there was a large increase in participation by African Americans, to 19.0%. (See Table 23.)

Table 23. Race and Ethnicity of Big Read Survey Respondents (N=3,384)

Race or Ethnicity	P1C1		P1C2		Phase 1		P2C1/Phase 2	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
American Indian or Alaska Native	0	0	9	1.7	9	0.8	29	1.3
Asian	0	0	19	3.6	19	1.6	32	1.5
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0	0	11	2.1	11	0.9	5	0.2
Black or African American	49	7.4	40	7.6	89	7.5	418	19.0
White	595	89.7	375	71.6	970	81.7	1590	72.4
White Hispanic; Other, Hispanic or Latino	19	2.9	70	13.4	89	7.5	123	5.6
TOTAL	663	100.0	524	100.0	1187	100.0	2197	100.0

Data Source: Participant Survey

Comparisons to U.S. Census Data

In compiling a profile of Big Read participants, we also looked at how they compared to the U.S. population as a whole. Table 24 shows The Big Read percentages, by Phase, the 2006 U.S. Census percentages, and the differences in how Hispanic populations are categorized. Figure 6 compares the average Big Read populations, across both phases, to Census figures.

These and other data in this report must be read with some caution, since the participant survey was only available online in Phase 1 (the first two cycles) and may have not reached all the potential respondents participating in The Big Read. Because Internet access is lower among minority populations, in rural areas, and only slightly higher among older people, these groups may be under-represented. However, since the education level of the respondents is so much higher than the overall population, and education is associated with greater Internet access, the responses may be less skewed for various demographic groups than initially expected.

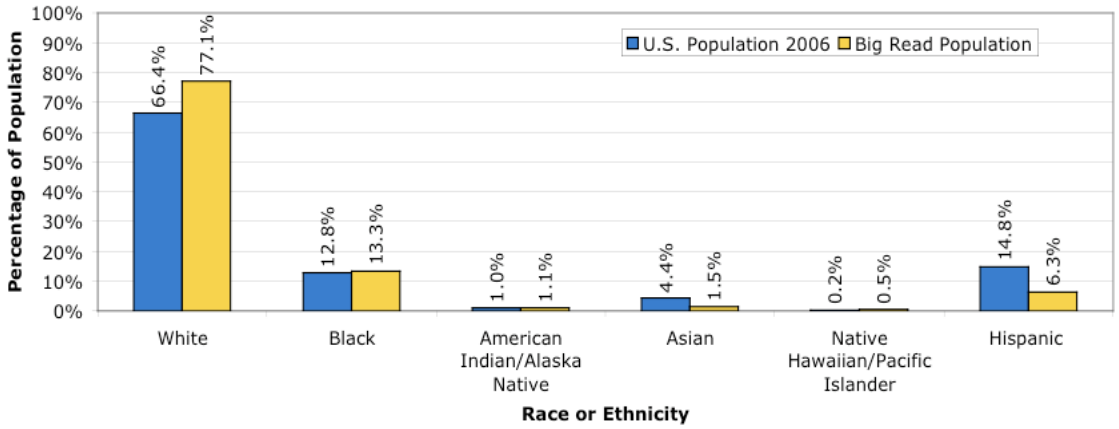
The overall percentage (averaged across both phases) of White Big Read participants (77.1%) is higher than the 2006 U.S. Census figure (66.4% for White, non-Hispanics). The overall percentage for African-American Big Read participants is similar to the Census figure (13.3% compared to 12.8%), although the Phase 2 Big Read percentage (19.0%) is greater. Percentages of Asian, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and American Indian or Alaska Native are also similar. As noted above, figures for the percentage of Hispanics participating in The Big Read are best estimates, due to confusion about the item, but suggest that, compared to Census figures, Hispanics are under-represented in The Big Read population.

Table 24. Racial and Ethnic Representation in The Big Read Compared to U.S. Census Representation

	Big Read Participant Survey Phase 1	Big Read Participant Survey Phase 2	2006 US Census
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.8	1.3	1.0
Asian	1.6	1.5	4.4
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.9	0.2	0.2
Black or African American	7.5	19.0	12.8
White	81.7	72.4	80.1
Two or more races			1.6
TOTAL, U.S. Census			100.1
White, Hispanic			
White, Non-Hispanic			66.4
Hispanic or Latino	7.5	5.6	14.8
TOTAL, Big Read	100.0	100.0	

Sources: Participant Survey; U.S. 2006 Census data

Figure 6. Comparisons of Big Read and U.S. Populations



Source: Participant Survey, U.S. 2006 Census data
Note: Rounding and averaging percentages for the overall Big Read population result in a total of 99.8. Some discrepancies in the overall White population compared to the Hispanic and mixed race populations in the U.S. Census figures means that the U.S. percentages total 99.6.

As noted often in this report, each local Big Read is different, and overviews and aggregated data may not capture the local variety, or, in this case, the diversity of a particular audience. Occasionally, we had sufficient participant data and feedback from case-study visits and interviews to paint a picture more detailed than the one provided by broader strokes.

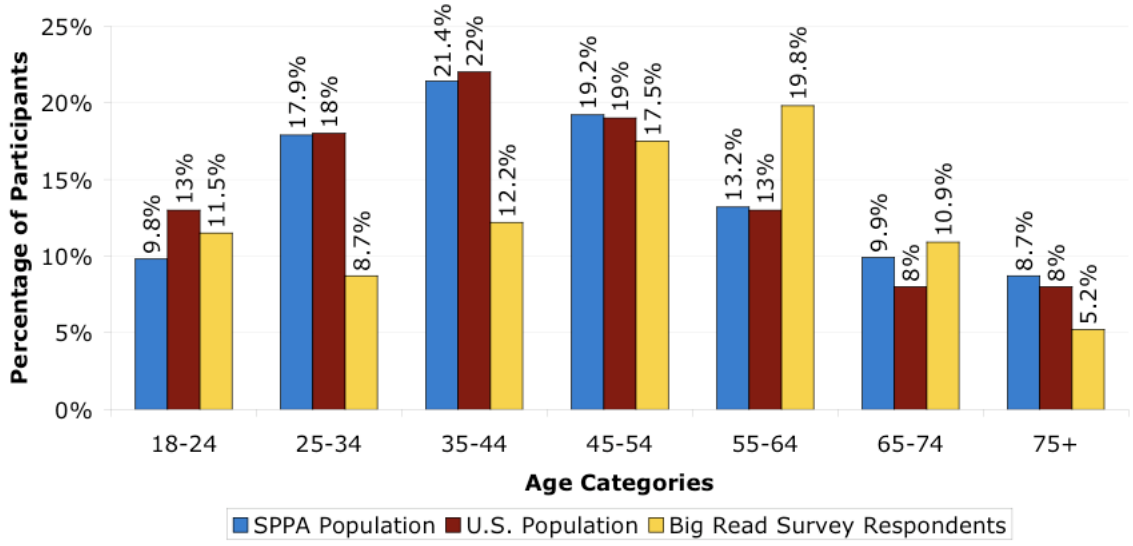
> *In the follow-up interview with the Cumberland County Library in Fayetteville, N.C., The Big Read coordinator shared evidence that the program and the choice of* Their Eyes Were Watching God *had helped them attract a diverse local audience, especially their African-American population. According to their figures, 65% of event audiences were African-American, higher than the proportion in the general population, which is 36.7% African-American and 51.8% White. The ethnic representation of The Big Read Participant Survey respondents from Cumberland County shows somewhat smaller percentages of African-Americans than the library's data (42.6% compared to 65%), but higher percentages than in the general population (42.6% compared to 36.7%), and a far higher percentage than in the overall Big Read survey respondent pool, which is just 4.1% African-American; there were also more Hispanics among Cumberland County survey respondents than in the overall pool, 4.3% compared to 2.3%.*

Schooling, Gender, and Adult Population by Age Group

As noted above, The Big Read population included more women than men and more adults with higher education levels than the general population. The three-to-one ratio of females to males is very different from the U.S. population, where the numbers are close to 50/50.

Census and SPPA figures do not include those under 18, but comparisons of U.S., SPPA, Big Read adult populations, by age group, show marked similarities and differences.[21] (See Figure 7.) The largest single concentration of Big Read participants, or nearly one fourth, is in the 55-64 age group, reflecting the skew toward older readers and the biggest difference between The Big Read population and the U.S. and SPPA populations. For other age groups—18-24, 45-54, and 65-74—percentages are fairly close. A notable cluster of differences is in the 25-34 and 35-44 age groups, perhaps suggesting that 25-44 year olds are the least likely to be participating in The Big Read. Other report data also indicate lower levels of participation among this demographic group, which tends to be more active in the outdoors, to move more often, and to be focused on careers and family. These factors may mean this age group reads less, or that they read different things (e.g., non-fiction or business/job-related content). While the data may not confirm a hiatus in reading among 25-44 year olds, or that there is more time for reading after 45, they do hint at these trends.

Figure 7. Age Distribution in Big Read, SPPA, and U.S. Adult Populations



Reading Habits of Big Read Participants

The other important element of The Big Read participant profile was reading habits, and all three participant instruments included pertinent items. The participant survey also included a set of items taken from the SPPA survey, discussed first below.

Participant Online Survey Data (SPPA Items)

Survey responses from Big Read participants indicate that, as a group, they are much more likely to be avid readers than the representative sample of the general adult population who responded to the SPPA survey. Compared to just over half (57.6%) of the SPPA respondents, almost all (92.2%) of The Big Read participant survey respondents had read a novel or short story in the 12

[21] The percentages shown in Figure 7, recalculated from Table 22, show the proportion by age group of the total *adult* population, n=2,975; 454 of the 3,429 total survey respondents were under 18 years of age.

months prior to the survey. Those in both groups were more likely to have read a novel or short story than poetry or plays, but the SPPA group much less so. Far fewer of that group had also listened to a reading, either live or recorded, or used the Internet to learn about, read, or discuss topics related to literature (novels, poetry, or plays). See Table 25.

Teens and young adults who participated in The Big Read (and completed a survey) also reported higher reading rates than the adults in the SPPA group. Also more likely to have read novels and/or short stories than poetry or plays, the younger group had used the Internet for literary purposes slightly less than the overall Big Read population, but far more than the SPPA population. (See Table 25.)

Table 25. Participating Teens' & Young Adults' Literary-Related Activities During the Year Prior to The Big Read

In the 12 months prior to the Big Read, did you:	Under 18	18-24	Big Read, All ages	SPPA
Read any plays?	49.0%	35.1%	27.6%	3.5%
Read any poetry?	61.3%	58.2%	60.4%	12.3%
Read any novels/short stories?	85.5%	83.0%	92.2%	57.6%
Use the Internet to learn about, read, or discuss topics related to literature?	59.7%	64.9%	70.0%	9.0%
Listen to a reading of poetry (live or recorded)?	38.6%	36.0%	34.6%	5.9%
Listen to a reading of novels or books (live or recorded)?	42.4%	34.5%	50.8%	9.7%

Source: Big Read participant Survey; SPPA frequencies

Other Reading Preferences

The Big Read instruments included additional items to provide a more detailed profile of reading habits and preferences. Data were analyzed by cycles and by age—to detect any differences as the program proceeded, and to explore differences between the group as a whole and teens and young adults. Findings showed that:

- Overall, Big Read Participant Survey respondents enjoyed reading: 60% of respondents rated their enjoyment of reading at "10" on a scale of 1-10, where 1=not at all, and 10=very much. Eighty percent of all Big Read survey respondents rated reading an 8 or above.

- Almost all those who completed a participant survey had read at least one book in the 12 months prior to the Big Read. Over half (56.4%) had read at least one book per month, and close to a third (31.2%) had read 21 or more books. Reading patterns and behaviors were consistent among participants in P1C1 and P1C2, or Phase 1. Phase 2 percentages were slightly lower—more participants read 1-5 books and fewer read 21 books or more. Event and postcard responses on reading patterns mirrored survey responses. (See Table 26.)

Table 26. If yes, how many books? (In the last 12 months) (N=2945)

	1-5 books	6-10 books	11-15 books	16-20 books	21 or more
P1C1 (n=668)	15.7%	19.9%	15.6%	12.3%	36.5%
P1C2 (n=455)	19.6%	17.6%	17.4%	12.8%	32.8%
P2C1 (n=1822)	30.7%	17.5%	13.7%	9.3%	28.9%
Overall (N=2945)	25.6%	18.1%	14.7%	10.5%	31.2%

Source: Big Read Participant Survey

- On average, eight out of every ten Big Read participants (82%) had purchased a book in the 12 months prior to the Big Read: 86% of P1C1 participants, 89% of P1C2 participants, and 78% of P2C1 participants. Three-quarters (77%) had checked out a book or tape from the public library: 85% of those in P1C1, 81% of P1C2 participants, and 73% of those participating in P2C1.

- As Table 27 shows, two-thirds of respondents (66.3%) reported spending at least 30 minutes a day reading for pleasure; over one-fourth (27.2%) spend an hour or more. Only 12.5% said they read for pleasure for less than 15 minutes a day.

Table 27. How much time do you spend reading for pleasure every day? (N=3458)

	< 15 minutes	15-30 minutes	30-45 minutes	45-60 minutes	An hour or more
P1C1 (n=713)	5.8%	20.9%	23.4%	20.1%	29.9%
P1C2 (n=495)	17.2%	17.0%	22.8%	16.0%	27.1%
P2C1 (n=2250)	13.6%	22.3%	20.5%	17.2%	26.4%
Overall (N=3458)	12.5%	21.2%	21.5%	17.6%	27.2%

Source: Big Read Participant Survey

Phase 2 survey respondents appear to read slightly less than Phase 1 respondents. One-half of the P2C1 participants, compared to almost two-thirds of the P1C1 and P1C2 (Phase 1) respondents, said they read more than 11 books in the previous year (see Table 26). The number of P2C1 respondents who said they enjoyed reading "very much" was also lower than the first two cycles (just over half compared to two-thirds). Although percentages shift across categories, Phase 2 respondents spend a little less time per day reading than those in Phase 1.

This may indicate that the Big Read was more successful in reaching "non" and "light" readers as it moved forward. Efforts to engage schools and school-age audiences did result in higher participation (and higher response levels) by audiences 24 years old and younger, and they may be less likely to have the time to be reading as much as the adults in earlier cohorts. The slightly lower reports may also reflect the fact that hard copies of the participant survey were made available during P2C1, soliciting responses from a more diverse audience than those solicited through the online survey in the previous cycles.

Reading Selections and Sources

Approximately three-fourths of the respondents said that when they read for pleasure, they read novels (78%) or magazines (73%). Somewhat fewer, but over half, read non-fiction (62%) and newspapers (58%). Smaller numbers of Big Read participants enjoy comics or graphic novels (16%) and textbooks (12%). (See Table 28.)

Table 28. What kinds of things do you read for pleasure? (N=3636)

	Novels	Magazines	Non-fiction	Newspapers	Comics/ Graphic Novels	Other	Textbooks
Number	2819	2669	2263	2108	581	510	448
Percent*	77.5%	73.4%	62.2%	58.0%	16.0%	14.0%	12.3%

Source: Big Read Participant Survey
*Percentages exceed 100 because respondents could select more than one response

Big Read participants said they most often get the books they read from public libraries (67%) and bookstores (64%). Fewer acquire books from friends and family (42%), online booksellers (31%), school or classroom libraries (19%), and yard sales (18%). Respondents also listed used bookstores, Friends of the Library book sales, thrift shops (e.g., Goodwill), mail-order book clubs, grocery stores, and discount retailers (e.g., Target, Wal-Mart). (See Table 29.)

Table 29. Where do you typically get the books you read? (N=3636)

	Libraries	Bookstores	Friends/Family	Online booksellers	School/Class libraries	Yard sales	Other
Number	2418	2336	1533	1113	673	663	302
Percent*	66.5%	64.2%	42.2%	30.6%	18.5%	18.2%	8.3%

Source: Big Read Participant Survey
*Percentages exceed 100 because respondents could select more than one response.

Respondents listed a wide range of titles in response to a question that asked them to list the last book they read for pleasure—from bestselling authors James Patterson, John Grisham, Janet Evonovich and Jodi Picoult, and popular book club selections like Elizabeth Gilbert's *Eat, Pray, Love* and Khaled Hosseini's *1,000 Splendid Suns*. Also listed were titles common on high school reading lists like Elie Wiesel's *Night*, Orwell's *1984* and Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, as well as young adult fiction titles like *Artemis Fowl, Ender's Game, Harry Potter*, and *Twilight*. Several listed autobiographies, including Barack Obama's *Audacity of Hope* and biographies of U.S. presidents; others, books that have also been popular at the movie box office: *Bridget Jones' Diary*, *DaVinci Code*, *The Other Boleyn Girl*. The list also included recent non-fiction titles, like *Freakanomics*, that are also becoming more common on college and university required reading lists. Respondents also listed a number of Big Read titles and authors: Jack London's *Call of the Wild*, Ernest Gaines' *A Lesson Before Dying*, and Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*; Dashiell Hammett's *The Dain Curse*, and Amy Tan's *The Bonesetter's Daughter*.

The most common response to why they had chosen to read that particular book was because someone suggested it (34%); almost a quarter said they selected the book because of the author; one in five said they read the book because they saw it in a library display. (See Table 30).

Table 30. Reason for selecting the book most recently read for pleasure (N=3636)

	Someone suggested it	Interest in author	Library display	Read a good review	Bookstore display	Bestseller list	Media attention
Number	1220	864	736	557	416	386	363
Percent*	33.6%	23.8%	20.2%	15.3%	11.4%	10.6%	10.0%

Source: Big Read Participant Survey
*Percentages exceed 100 because respondents could select more than one response.

Teens and Young Adults

Of those teens and young adults who completed a Big Read participant survey, most (74.4% of those under 18, and 70.9% of those 18-24) said "yes," they had read books in the 12 months prior to the Big Read. More than half of teens (58%) and three quarters of young adults (75%) would be considered "light" or "moderate" readers based on SPPA categories, having read between 1-10 books the previous year (see Table 31).

Table 31. If yes, how many books?

	1-5 books	6-10 books	11-15 books	16-20 books	21 or more
Under 18 (n=303)	43.1%	14.9%	7.9%	3.5%	19.4%
18-24 (n=255)	62.1%	13.2%	6.6%	3.7%	8.1%

Source: Big Read Participant Survey

Teens and young adults were also generally quite positive about how much they enjoyed reading: almost two-thirds (64%) of respondents under 18 gave reading a 7 or above on the 10-point scale; the 18-24 were slightly higher: 72% gave reading a 7 or above.

It is difficult to know how well an enjoyment for reading translates into time spent reading for pleasure every day; however, about the same percentage of those who rated their enjoyment of reading 7 or above read for pleasure at least 15 minutes a day: 65% of teens, and 73% of young adults (see Table 32).

Table 32. How much time do you spend reading for pleasure every day?

	Less than 15 minutes	15-30 minutes	30-45 minutes	45-60 minutes	An hour or more
Under 18 (n=444)	35.4%	25.5%	14.4%	10.8%	14%
18-24 (n=388)	27.1%	29.9%	18.6%	10.8%	13.7%

Source: Big Read Participant Survey

Almost three quarters of young adults and two thirds of teens said they read magazines for pleasure. Novels and non-fiction were the next popular choice for both groups (see Table 33).

Table 33. What kinds of things do you read for pleasure?

	Novels	Comics/Graphic Novels	Newspapers	Magazines	Textbooks	Non-fiction	Other
Under 18 (n=440)	57.3%	37.3%	28.4%	65%	1%	40.9%	22%
18-24 (n=392)	71.4%	23%	41.1%	74.2%	15.3%	39.5%	10.5%

Source: Big Read Participant Survey

Asked what types of reading materials they purchased regularly, those under 18 were most likely to buy magazines (52%) and novels (38.9%) and to buy them from bookstores (54.5%); however, they were almost as likely to borrow them from public libraries (52.7%) or get them from school or classroom libraries (49.1%). For those respondents between 18-24, 48.7% said they purchase magazines; 43.9% novels; 71.9% said they bought their reading materials from bookstores, 45.9% borrowed them from public libraries, and 44.6% from friends or family. Both groups said they are most likely to read books recommended to them by others (44.6% of those under 18 and 33.4% of those between 18-24); about a quarter of both groups (24.5% of those under 18 and 26.6% of those 18-24) said an interest in the author is another reason they choose the books they read.

Data on where participants get their books, the titles of the book they last read for pleasure, and an interest in authors may indicate some success for The Big Read in raising the profile of classic works of literature for readers who typically wouldn't select Big Read titles for pleasure reading.

SECTION 6: POINT OF CONTACT

How do participants hear about The Big Read?

Earlier sections have described how grantees got the word out about The Big Read—through conventional and unconventional media outlets, partners' contact with constituencies, and teasers that grantees hoped would create a Big Read buzz. Grantees also promoted the program by distributing free books to readers everywhere, from schools, museums, and retirement centers to "car repair shops, the local Harley Davidson dealership, gyms and health clubs, and bars." To gauge the effectiveness of their efforts, event cards and participant surveys asked respondents how they heard about The Big Read, and post cards asked them where they got the cards.

Overall Responses

Feedback reaffirms the pivotal role libraries play in The Big Read and the value of getting word out about the program through the places people frequent, as well as the people they know:

- Most participants said they heard about The Big Read from a library (67.0% of the card respondents and 49.5% of survey respondents) or by word-of-mouth (65.0% and 28.0%). Table 34 shows the overall results from the event cards (first two cycles only) and participant surveys. Among media outlets, newspapers—listed by approximately half of the event card respondents and one-fourth of the survey respondents—appear to be an effective tool, selected by more respondents than radio or TV. Of The Big Read materials, posters or banners seem to have been most visible as a first point of contact.

Table 34. Where Participants Heard about The Big Read

	Event Cards (N=9884)		Participant Survey (N=3636)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Library	4331	67.0	1800	49.5
Word of mouth	4432	65.0	1018	28.0
Newspaper	2638	49.1	846	23.3
Poster	1030	23.4	554	15.2
Web	544	13.5	320	8.8
Radio	375	9.6	237	6.5
TV	337	8.7	211	5.8
Mail	861	20.0	166	4.6
Bookstore	275	7.2	205	5.6
Reader's Guide	287	7.5	158	4.3
Magazine	97	2.7	67	1.8

Source: Big Read Event Cards and Participant Survey
(Percentages exceed 100 because participants could select more than one response.)

- Rankings were similar across instruments in the top categories, but shifted slightly for the less frequently selected categories; higher percentages, for example, of event card respondents heard about the program through the mail. As Table 34 above shows, percentages for the top categories were higher for the event card responses than for the participant surveys.

- Results were fairly similar across cycles except for variations in participant survey responses for the top categories: percentages of respondents indicating that they heard about The Big Read from a library were higher in the first cycle (65.0% in P1C1, compared to around 44.5% and 45.8% in P1C2 and P2C1).

- Participants from communities where libraries, along with arts councils and organizations that support the arts, were the grantee were more likely to have heard about The Big Read from a library than those participating through a college or university or a performing arts group. However, for each of the latter two groups, libraries were the second most likely point of contact, following word-of-mouth.

Differences between Younger and Older Audiences

- Older readers were more likely than younger readers to hear about The Big Read from newspapers: percentages in fact declined steadily (see Table 35).

Table 35. Contact through Newspapers, by Age

75 and older	65-74	55-64	45-54	35-44	25-34	18-24	<18
35.0%	37.2%	33.4%	25.9%	23.1%	12.6%	6.0%	5.9%

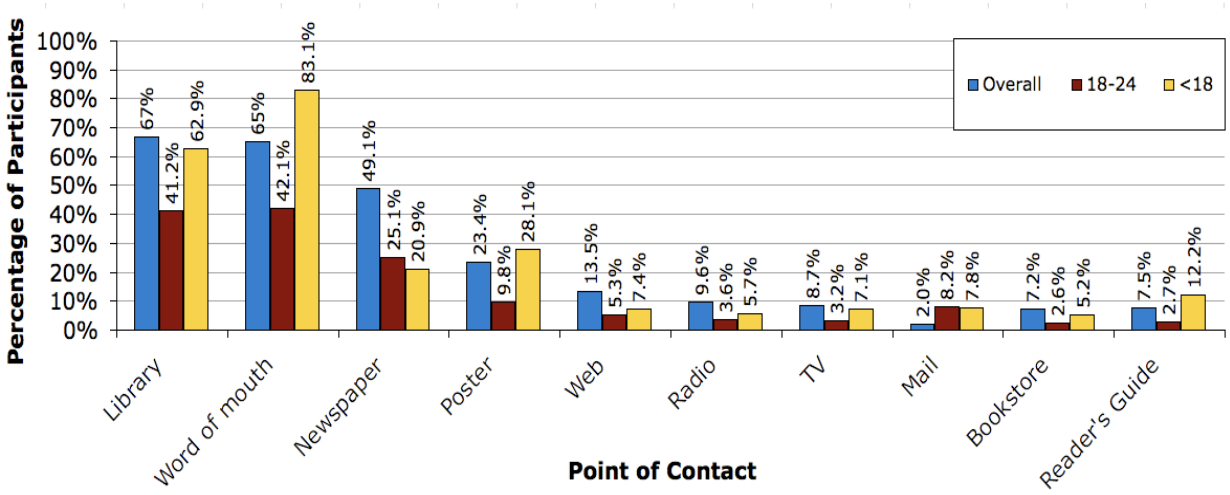
There were also declines, by age, in percentages of participants who heard about The Big Read through libraries, though not as steep.

- Teens and young adults who attended a Big Read event and completed a card most frequently (80-83%) said they first heard about The Big Read from others (word-of-mouth). The library also seems to have effectively promoted The Big Read among these groups: half to almost two-thirds said the library was their first point of contact. (See Figure 8.)

- Of The Big Read promotional materials, posters were most visible to teens and young adults; of media outlets, newspapers seemed to have reached this audience more effectively than the Web site, TV, or radio—though not as frequently as they reached the overall audience.

- The under-18 group was more likely to have heard about The Big Read at the library and word-of-mouth than the 18-24 year old group, perhaps explained by the fact that they are more likely to frequent libraries, or take part in school, family or hallway conversations through which they would hear about the program.

Figure 8. Point of Contact, by Age and Overall



Source: Big Read Event Cards
(Percentages exceed 100 because participants could select more than one response.)

- Of the two younger age groups surveyed, a large portion (57% and 38%) checked "other," and volunteered a number of responses that included Big Read events and other larger-scale gatherings—festivals, fairs, 4-H events—where there were Big Read exhibits. This group appears to have a greater range of information sources to which they turn for information.

Book and Postcard Distribution

Data from postcards in some ways mirror the other point-of-contact data: 42.8% (N=1295) of the postcard respondents, overall, said they got their postcard from a library, and 32.5% (N=985) said they got it from a friend, but some differences suggest that books and postcards made their way to different audiences and that distribution widened from cycle to cycle. In P1C1, almost three-fourths (72.9%) of the postcard respondents said they got their cards from libraries, and 9.7% said they got their card from a friend. In P1C2, the percentage of those reporting that they got their card at a library dropped to 32.6%, and that for friends rose to 40.3%.

Percentages of respondents selecting "other" in both sets of cards is fairly stable—13.7% for P1C1, and 10.8% for P1C2—but what is contained in "other" appears to grow wider. Most P1C1 respondents list events: Kick-offs, book club discussions, theatre events, fairs, read-a-thons, and film screenings, along with arts centers, schools, and conventional distribution or partner sites. Respondents from P1C2 list these events and venues as well, but places such as a hotel, Rotary Club, YMCA, restaurant, senior center, church, prison, and Curves also appear.

SECTION 7: TRENDS IN EVENT ATTENDANCE

What events were most successful with Big Read audiences, and which attracted new audiences?

Successful Programming and Event Attendance

The Big Read financial resources allowed grantees to extend the scope and quantity of programming. Many Big Read events took place onsite at grantee or partner venues—libraries, museums, literary centers—but grantees also found that taking events out into the community proved successful. When P1C1 grantees reported success in taking events "where people gather"—at city markets, coffee shops, the steps of city hall—program planners encouraged grantees in subsequent cycles to hold events in these more novel venues, and in senior centers, prisons, and other venues with ready audiences. Postcard responses may reflect this movement.

The evaluation looked at what kinds of events drew participants from two perspectives: event cards asked respondents what kind of event they attended, and whether it made them want to learn or read more; grantee surveys asked what events grantees thought were most successful in drawing audiences.

Their ratings, show that, overall, grantees considered their efforts successful. Close to three-fourths of the grantees rated over half of the event types listed as moderately to very successful. Means show that they assigned several events a three or higher; no means were under 2.5 (see Table 36). Events that garnered highest ratings were theatrical events (M=3.2), followed closely by family or community events, lectures or talks, musical performances, exhibits, and biographer appearances (M=3.0). (See Table 36.)

Table 36. Grantees' Ratings of Big Read Events

Event Type	% Moderately/very successful	Overall Mean*	Overall SD
Theatrical event (n=116)	79.3%	3.2	1.1
Family/Community Event (N=106)	74.5%	3.1	1.0
Lecture or Talk by other persons (N=138)	73.9%	3.1	0.9
Musical Performance (N=59)	73.1%	3.0	1.3
Exhibit or Display (N=131)	71.8%	3.0	1.1
Biographer appearance (N=61)	75.0%	2.9	1.3
Film Screening (N=158)	67.7%	2.9	1.1
Public Reading of Big Read book (N=76)	66.7%	2.8	1.2
Panel Discussion (N=125)	64.4%	2.8	1.1
Public Official Appearance (N=111)	55.0%	2.7	1.1
Author Appearance (N=89)	74.5%	2.7	1.4
Book Club Discussions (N=159)	51.8%	2.5	1.1

Source: Grantee Survey
*Means calculated on a 4-point scale where 1=not at all successful and 4=very successful.

In narratives, interviews, and open-ended survey responses, grantees shared additional thoughts on the events that worked well with audiences. Comments generally aligned with ratings.

Kick-Offs, Finales, and Family, Cross-generational Events

In the spirit of celebrating reading, grantees launched and ended their Big Reads with fanfare and a festive spirit. Linking Big Read events to existing annual events, ending with celebrations, and bracketing the month-long program with festive kick-offs and finales drew crowds and built continuity and sustainability. Kick-offs often gave grantees a chance to give away free books and schedules for upcoming events. The High Plains Writing Project in Roswell, New Mexico, which kicked off their reading of *To Kill a Mockingbird* at the country fair, had "thousands of people" stopping to see the materials and the re-constructed Finch living room. Combining their Big Read with their annual international festival helped Harris County, Texas, launch *The Joy Luck Club*. Cumberland County in Fayetteville, North Carolina took advantage of a natural audience by concluding their program and handing out awards for art and essay contests at the well-attended Dogwood Festival. A library Summer Reading program that came right on the heels of The Big Read linked the two. Final events such as The Cabin's "gelato on the lawn," held to invoke the Italian setting of *A Farewell to Arms*, or the Steinbeck Center's cross-generational celebration (see sidebar), gave programs a festive, family feel.

According to the Big Read coordinator, one of the most successful events was a screening of the 1940 film version Grapes of Wrath *for 37 adult and child residents at the Camporo Labor Camp in Salinas. As part of the event, the National Steinbeck Center partnered with one of the farming organizers who wanted to do this as a way to build trust and open a conversation with the workers. Staff from the Steinbeck Center brought hot chocolate and pan dulce, there were children running all over the camp and the farming organizer gathered people together using a bullhorn. The scene was one of great cacophony and joy. It was one of the best activities we did. It was interesting watching peoples' guard come down.*

Theatrical Events

Some sites opened with theatrical events—according to grantees, the most popular type of events—which allowed grantees to bring cross-sections and multi-generational groups together.

> *Our opening event featured playwright Luis Valdez. Our theatre was packed with a real cross-section of our community including many people who had never been in the theatre building before especially those from the migrant workers community. Everyone left the kickoff event with a free book and a CD from the NEA. (Adams State College, Alamosa, CO)*

Using readings, actors, and impersonators, communities found that theatrical events that brought authors to life were successful for promotion and programming. In the case of The Cabin in Boise, Idaho, a Hemingway look-alike drew people, and even a cardboard cut-out became an immediately recognizable part of subsequent Big Read events. In Timberland, Washington, a Willa Cather scholar and impersonator engaged Big Read audiences of all ages in conversation with her about her life and writings.

Timberland invited four different groups to provide events for The Big Read and scheduled week-long tours in several venues in the participating communities. The line-up included a repertory theatre that adapted a portion of My Ántonia to actively engage the audience and provide new perspectives; a quartet who researched, found, and wrote musical selections based on the book; a Willa Cather scholar and impersonator who talked about writing My Ántonia; and a Bohemian band. The Willa Cather scholar also performed in two high schools, engaging students in discussions about the book and her life; at an alternative high school in Hoquaim, the suicide of Mr. Schimerda was connected to that of Hoquaim-born musician Kurt Cobain and suicides of friends and relatives, with students also exploring these themes in art. Several students returned for evening performances in their communities, bringing family and friends. These featured events attracted young and old and successfully appealed to both avid and lapsed readers. Sales of the book increased after the events, indicating that those in the audience came to listen to music or watch a dramatic performance and left with the book in hand, inspired to read it.

Based on grantees' comments and the study team's onsite visits, theatrical events that pleased audiences time and again were the many readings and performances of the texts. These events often included students, making them a part of The Big Read, showcasing their talents, and, perhaps more important, drawing their attention to the language of the novels. In Los Angeles, where Will & Co. coached Hollywood High School students and senor citizens in staged scenes from *The Grapes of Wrath*, students afterward said that other authors who "didn't use metaphors like Steinbeck" seemed dull in comparison. As Director Colin Cox said, activities such as these "give books legs." Not all performances were from memory: in some sites students recited with book in hand, and the experience still seemed to have the desired outcome of making the books come alive for them and their audiences.

Biographer and Author Appearances

Nationally-recognized scholars and experts on various authors, which grantees said they could never have considered or afforded without Big Read support, were highly successful. Talks or appearances by biographers (Charles Shields, Harper Lee's biographer, and Sam Weller, author of *The Bradbury Chronicles*) were popular not just with book-club or adult literary audiences but also by participants of all ages and backgrounds. They helped bring authors and books to life, and often prompted a higher-level discussion; teachers said these experts and scholars gave them new ideas about how to teach the book and engage students. Students were often flattered to host these "celebrities" at their school.

> *The most far-reaching partnership evolved from my innocent statement, "Wouldn't it be great to have an interview with Ray Bradbury?" From there I reached out to his publisher, who connected me with his agent, who connected me with his daughter, Alexandra, who graciously asked her dad if he would be willing to do an interview with us. Once we found out the cost, I reached out to other* Fahrenheit 451 *sites and found three that agreed to work with us on a telephone conference call interview. But the*

partnering did not end there! We approached our local community college who allowed us to "broadcast" through their facility. They had their techies set up all the necessary equipment and record the interview for reproduction on CDs (to make the interview available to a wider audience), while we put together a Power Point of Bradbury photos and covers to play throughout the interview for all the sites. (Easton Area Public Library, Easton, PA)

Panel Discussions

Although panel discussions received slightly lower ratings overall, in open-ended comments grantees often described successful events that brought the community together to discuss serious, controversial issues, such as racial discrimination (*To Kill a Mockingbird*), censorship (*Fahrenheit 451*), and war and healing (*A Farewell to Arms*). In an area where "cultural opportunities are few and far between," the Libraries of Eastern Oregon organized several events that examined the history and mistreatment of Chinese populations in the area (see sidebar).

The Libraries of Eastern Oregon organized two presentations by the Oregon National Guard and a scholar and author who talked about the massacre of Chinese miners in the area. These events focused on the social and cultural history of the local area, and attracted a wide range of participants. Speakers included a local historian who studies Chinatown history, Gregory Nokes, who has written about the murders of Chinese miners in 1887, and a historian who had studied the Chinese merchants in Baker City and their experiences of Chinese exclusion "This is a small town, I knew these people," said one of The Big Read coordinators, but it brought them out to the library where I hadn't seen them before."

Exhibits

The Big Read gave community members access to high-quality arts and literary events, and often free admission to art galleries, museum exhibits, concerts; and theatre performances generated interest and audiences. Some institutions (e.g., Bridgeport's Barnum Museum) distributed free passes at Big Read events for attendees to return. Exhibits created for The Big Read also enabled grantees "to reach new audiences that previously had not shown an interest in the museum," such as, according to one grantee, "those at the Literacy Project, patrons of a local bar, and ethnically diverse populations in a nearby city."

The partnership with the Little White School House Museum in Oswego was also productive. More than 400 people viewed the exhibits about immigrant farmers on the Oswego Prairie at the Oswego Public Library and the museum. The assistant director of the museum said that some people related that they came to the museum because they saw the exhibit at the library, and we also had people tell us that they came to the library specifically because they saw the exhibit at the museum or the article about it in the Ledger-Sentinel. It was an excellent way to publicize The Big Read and to cross-promote our institutions. (Aurora)

Book discussions

Although book discussions were among the most common events, grantees gave them mixed reviews. Two strategies seemed to lead to greater success. One was to open book discussions up and attract diverse groups, which some sites did via technology.

> *Besides the general readership from the three public libraries, the project involved 26 high school and middle school teachers, book discussions between schools via distance learning technology, tie-in to three Eastern Arizona College classes, three local prison populations, a juvenile detention center and many new readers. (Safford City, Graham Conty Library, Safford, AZ)*

A second strategy was to make book discussions less formal, often by changing venues and relocating to coffee houses.

> *The Coffee House discussions in New Rockford for the dual credit English class as well as adults yielded great discussions. Each week over 30 students met to discuss* Fahrenheit 451. *(Dakota Prairie Regional Center for the Arts, New Rockford, ND)*

> *High school students participated actively in book discussion groups at Hildegard's Café, Books-a-Million, and Odum Library in addition to studying* Their Eyes Were Watching God *in school. It should be noted that Valdosta High School and Lowndes High School are considered bitter rivals. However, they came together for book discussions that provided a common theme of interest. (Valdosta State University, Odum Library, Valdosta, GA)*

> *The community's interest in getting together to talk about books and the key role the library could play in connecting people led the Ironwood partners to rethink their book discussions and how they promote them. In their programming more generally, as well as specifically for their next Big Read, they plan to promote their book discussions as conversation cafés. Erickson said the change should dispel notions among community members that book discussions are formal events: "In our area, when you say book discussions, they get all nervous. They want to talk about the book," said Erickson, but such opportunities need to be promoted as "informal and casual." It was their partnership with 4-H that generated the idea to give participants mugs and market the discussions as friendly conversations around a cup of coffee. (Ironwood, MI)*

Event Attendance, and Participation by Teens and Young Adults

Event card data suggest that approximately a third of the participants were attending book club discussions, and a third other special events, including, typically, Kick-offs or theatrical events, and, somewhat less frequently, panel discussions or lecture (see Table 37).

Table 37. Percent Distribution of Event Attendance (N=10,254)

Book club/discussion	Family event	Author/Biographer	Other special	Keynote	Media
33.8%	6.1%	12.5%	33.2%	8.6%	6.0%

Event card data from teens and young adults also show that the most frequently attended events were book discussions. However, we know that around a third of all event cards returned to us (from participants of any age) were collected at book discussions. The high frequency more likely suggests, then, that book discussions were events that most easily facilitated the distribution and collection of event cards. Even so, it is worth noting that 36.4% of teens (n=545) and 42.3% of young adults (n=251) who completed an event card attended a book discussion, and similarly high numbers of teens and young adults attended other events, especially Kickoffs.

Most teens and young adults appear to be current students. Of those under 18 who attended a Big Read event, over half (55%) were high school students; about a third (32%) had completed grade school (and thus were in middle school); 10% had completed high school and 3% had some college. Of those between the ages of 18-24 who attended a Big Read event, 10% had not completed high school, and 15% were high school graduates. (We have no way of knowing how many of the students in this group ended their schooling with high school.) Among those reporting college attendance, 60% had some college, 13% were college graduates, and 2% had an advanced degree.

In contrast to the adult audience, the teens and young adults attending Big Read events were not, for the most part, “avid” readers (defined in *Reading at Risk* as those reading 50 books or more per year). The greatest combined group of these younger audiences was comprised of “light” and “moderate” readers. (See Part 5, p. 112 for further discussion of the teen and young participants and their reading habits and preferences, and the impact or potential impact of The Big Read on their reading activities.)

SECTION 8: SUCCESS IN ATTRACTING AUDIENCES

How successful were grantees in reaching their audiences, especially diverse audiences?

Perceived Success in Reaching Audiences

In addition to asking grantees about various successful events, we asked them about their success in reaching various audiences. Their responses, along with the demographic profile reported in Section 5, complete this composite picture of who is participating in The Big Read and what engages them in events and literature.

Most grantees responding to the online survey said they targeted a broad range of potential participants, and they reported partial success in reaching all of them. Means, overall, and by cycle, ranged from around 1.3 to 3.0 on a 4-point scale. Reports are similar across cycles, though reports from P2C1 were higher, perhaps because of the inclusion of schools and students. The standard deviations in Table 38, an indication of the range in which most grantees reported their success, show some variance in perceptions of successes.

Table 38. Perceived Success in Reading Audiences

Targeted Audiences	Somewhat successful	Moderately/very successful	Overall Mean*	Overall SD
Library, museum, or institution patrons (N=251)	20.3%	72.9%	3.0	1.1
Teachers/students, in-class (N=250)	20.4%	68.3%	2.9	1.1
Seniors (N=224)	25.6%	64.7%	2.8	1.1
College/university students, faculties (N=205)	31.0%	49.5%	2.5	1.2
Young adults/students, out-of-school (N=228)	36.4%	37.7%	2.1	1.2
Underserved populations (N=207)	38.5%	33.9%	2.0	1.3
Readers not likely to seek out literary fiction or events (N=242)	42.6%	32.4%	2.0	1.2
Non- or reluctant readers (N=233)	46.3%	24.9%	1.8	1.2
Non-native speakers (N=207)	34.4%	24.6%	1.6	1.3
The visually impaired (N=87)	22.3%	18.1%%	1.3	1.3

Source: Grantee Survey
*Means calculated on a 4-pt. scale where 1=not at all successful and 4=very successful.

Ratings and comments indicated that:

- Overall, grantees reported being most successful with library and other institution patrons (M=3.2). Not surprisingly, given participation breakdowns by age, grantees reported success with senior citizens (M=3.0) as well.

- Although, as noted elsewhere, grantees experienced some challenges engaging with schools, overall they reported success with teachers and students participating as a class or in school (M=3.0). They generally considered their efforts in attracting college and

university students and faculties (M=2.8) and young adults out-of-school (M=2.1) somewhat less successful.

- Grantees were less confident in their success with non-native speakers (M=2.5) and underserved populations (2.4), and least successful attracting readers not likely to seek out literary fiction or events (2.2), and reluctant or non-readers (2.1), though very few respondents reported being not at all successful.

In Part One, we described a set of correlation analyses conducted to see it the number of partner organizations had an impact on grantees' perceptions about their success or capacity building. Because at least half of the grantees reported at least seven partner organizations, we divided grantees (N=294) into those that had seven or fewer partners, and those that had more than seven. We then recategorized grantees' responses to the items in Table 38 into a binary response pattern—those who cited success and those who did not. The correlations were slight, but there did seem to be an association between having more than seven partners and success with readers not likely to seek out literary fiction or events and reluctant readers. Conducting a similar analysis with items asking grantees about changes in capacity, we found a correlation, beyond that which could be expected to occur by chance, between having a critical mass of partners and increases in perceived capacity to "attract diverse audiences." This connection is supported by the qualitative data reported below.

Outreach Efforts

Other data indicate that grantees' efforts to engage hard-to-reach audiences were often extensive even though they considered their success modest. As one grantee noted, describing "inroads with some of our physically disabled audiences and racial minorities," there is "much, much more we need to do, but this was a good start." "A good start" would certainly describe efforts to combine literary and literacy efforts. Grantees took The Big Read to literacy centers, alternative schools, programs for English language learners, jails, prisons, and residential centers for incarcerated juveniles. The most successful of these reading groups were organized by experienced discussion leaders—e.g., teachers who had previously taught in prison programs, and required that reading groups have GEDs, to facilitate reading and discussion. Many also involved youth in non-traditional learning environments, such as alternative schools for students with behavioral and academic problems. More and more, grantees seem to be including local literacy councils in planning and programming.

> *We purchased audio books and large print materials for our visually impaired patrons--we got a special grant to cover these costs--and shared these items with retirement or senior centers, School for the Blind, and school for dyslexic students. Adult Literacy groups also participated, as did residents of the Juvenile Detention Center. (East Baton Rouge)*

The data also seem to suggest that more and more grantees are using the arts as a way to reach non- or reluctant-readers, not only through the theatrical events described earlier, but also with design and craft activities, art contests, storytelling, and music—all intended to offer different entrees into the themes of The Big Read books.

Successful Strategies in Reaching Diverse Audiences

Most libraries, museums, arts agencies, colleges and universities, and social service organizations receiving Big Read grants indicated that prior to The Big Read they had a good understanding of their publics or programming in place to reach regular patrons. With The Big Read, they reached out to new demographic groups that could benefit from their programs and services, expanding their reach and expanding the arts, literature, and literacy offerings.

The Big Read provided the resources and impetus to reach out, engaging readers of all kinds in an experience with a good book. In addition to doing more marketing, grantees' reports and survey responses indicate that they used three general strategies to extend their outreach efforts. It's important to note that all these efforts worked together to reach new audiences.

- Most grantees held events designed expressly for multiple types of audiences, including events billed as cross-generational (68% of grantees), cross-cultural (40%), teen-and-parent (32%), younger children-and-parent (43%), and events to unite town residents with members of the local college or university (51%).

- Grantees also sought out new venues and diversified programming, for example, "going to rural communities or advertising on Spanish language radio stations," to reach different audiences than they did at the "theatrical presentations or the literary panel discussion" (Georgia O'Keefe Museum. Santa Fe, NM).

- Perhaps most important, grantees formed new partnerships, which "brought in much broader and more diverse audiences and greater participation in the project," and took grantees and Big Read events to new audiences and areas not always accommodated by or drawn to arts and literary institutions. Comments from grantees show that these audiences included different ethnic groups, special needs audiences, reluctant readers, and adult learners.

  Henry Ford Community College has a diverse student population. Dearborn has the highest Arabic population in the U.S. The Hamtramck Library services numerous ethnic groups. Setting up events at these locations ensured we would be reaching populations that might otherwise be left out. (Wayne-Metropolitan Community Action Agency, Wyandotte, MI)

> *We found large numbers of visually impaired in nursing homes and assisted living facilities…. Since this was a book many had read as youth, the outreach was very successful. It was a win for the institutions and a win for our organizations. …To attract reluctant readers, we "buddied up" with the adult education instructions.* …The Call of the Wild *was a perfect fit. Adult education students could relate to the adversity Buck faced in the wild. (Dekalb Public Library, Dekalb, IL)*

The following further describes the outreach strategies to specific populations, as reported by grantees in their final narratives.

Children

Big Read grantees incorporated Big Reads for Little Readers, adopting companion texts by theme (e.g., *Out of the Dust* by Karen Hesse for the Big Read selection *Grapes of Wrath*) or author (e.g., Amy Tan's *Sagwa The Chinese, Vietnamese Cat*; Rudolfo Anaya's children's books). Inspired by Zora Neale Hurston's story collections, several sites made storytelling a central part of their Big Reads and little reads for children, bringing Hurston's stories to life with "puppets, costumes and audience participation." In Cumberland County, North Carolina, a museum series of "jazzy" art sessions, drawing on Hurston's connection to the Harlem Renaissance, combined art, music, and stories. Anaya's novel, too, lent itself to storytelling sessions. These little reads leveraged partnerships with schools and children's literacy programs, drew in wide audiences for children's programming, and gave The Big Read a family focus. Several children's Big Read activities also effectively drew parents, and some sites took advantage of this by having free books and lists of upcoming events on hand.

> *Reading Fun New Books! was an innovative program designed by Community Services (Parks and Recreation) to involve younger children in the Pomona Big Read. This program included reading activities at the various community centers, including staff from the Cal Poly Pomona Downtown Center who visited the centers and children, and encouraged them to read aloud, read to them, and gave them age appropriate books. …We also utilized our local weekly farmer's market to reach out to children and families with the Big Read. (Cal Poly Pomona, CA)*

> *This year's highlight was* The Big Read for Little Readers**.** *Funded by a $10,000 grant from the Community Foundation of Broward, The Big Read for Little Readers allowed FCB to develop and implement an early childhood reading project designed to give parents and children an opportunity to read together. The program consisted of over forty story times & activities featuring Amy Tan's children's book,* Sagwa, the Chinese Siamese Cat*. The Big Read for Little Readers was featured prominently at the annual Story Book Festival held in Pembroke Pines. Children and parents participated in interactive storytelling activities enhanced by a dramatic Chinese Lion Dance*

performance. The Big Read for Little Readers provided 2,500 children with a free copy of Sagwa *to add to their home library, while at the same time promoting The Big Read to their parents, caregivers and teachers. (Florida Center for the Book/Broward Public Library Foundation, Ft. Lauderdale, FL)*

The Art of the Storyteller exhibition in Shirlington Library, though intended for adults, was very popular with children, who often dragged their parents through the library to see it. The Koshare storyteller figures, created by New Mexico artists, are whimsical figures that represent the importance of narrative in Bless Me, Ultima *and in Chicano culture. (Arlington Cultural Affairs, Arlington, VA)*

Latinos

Teatros, tardeadas, and other events featuring Latino music, food, speakers, and themes were successful in attracting Latino audiences. Partnerships were key, especially for grantees who had not previously reached out to Latinos; those with literacy agencies, such as Right to Read, encouraged Spanish speakers to read The Big Read book in Spanish, then facilitated guided discussions in English. Extending invitations to events through word-of-mouth seemed especially important—in several sites, first-time book discussion group attendees said they had come because someone had invited them or they had heard about it through a friend.

Part of the Museum's plan was to attract participants by presenting the novel within the context of familiar aspects of Northern New Mexico culture. …the Museum presented a theatrical reading of the novel by Teatro del Alma, a group of actors from Northern New Mexico College, [which] featured canciones tradicionales by Trio de los Bailes…. Similar events included a panel discussion on Latino-Hispanic literature and talks on curandera healing practices…. We were able to contract numerous Hispanic artists to participate in the project…and to provide programming for small cultural organizations in various communities that will help them build their audiences – community performances are rare in these areas. (Georgia O'Keefe Museum, Santa Fe, NM)

Berkeley Reads Literacy Program facilitated a productive partnership with the Bay Area Hispano Institute for Advancement School Age Program. BAHIA is a private nonprofit corporation that provides bilingual and multicultural education; its focus is on low-income Latino families. Our Big Read Literacy Caravan reached out to seventy children ages 5-10. The kids heard stories collected by anthropologist Zora Neale Hurston…. Each child received a free book. Nine teachers and the site director were involved. (Berkeley Public Library, Berkeley, CA)

Reluctant and Non Readers

Grantees reported using children's programming, key partnerships, creative marketing, the distribution of free books, and events intended to draw audiences into the book through other media, e.g., music, art, storytelling.

> *Our partnership with the Antonio E. Garcia Arts Center was particularly productive. They are located in a low-income neighborhood where many of the residents are traditionally non-readers. By placing our photo exhibit in the center and hosting our storyteller there, we were able to reach out to one of our key target audiences. Also, their after school program insured that both the public and their clients would be able to enjoy our storyteller program. (Friends of Corpus Christi, TX)*

> *We tried several avenues to reach both non-readers and lapsed readers. Many, of course, were caught in the net we cast over our schools. But, within the community, we had to rely more on enticement. We left [Reader' and Audio] guides and complimentary copies of the book in car repair shops, the local Harley Davidson dealership, gyms and health clubs, bars, and any place a volunteer drove by and said, "Hey, I bet they haven't read this." We also left posters with timelines and sticky notes of welcome in these same spots. And, we talked to people. In grocery stores, hair salons, and a gazillion times in Wal-Mart, we would stop strangers and ask if they knew about The Big Read. If they said "No," they left enlightened. (High Plains Writing Project, Roswell, NM)*

Spanish Speakers and other English Language Learners

Several grantees report reaching out to their Spanish-speaking populations for the first time or discovering new ways to successfully engage them. Grantees describe distributing free Spanish translations and Big Read materials to collaborate with literacy programs, English conversation groups, outreach centers, and to begin new programs for Spanish speakers. Translating marketing materials was necessary for many sites to reach out to Spanish speakers.

> *Another successful program was our collaboration with Literacy Chicago, a non-profit group providing classes and tutoring in reading, everyday math, grammar, and other basic skills to people with limited English. The Big Read materials were introduced to three reading groups and a new reading group has since been formed to finish* The Joy Luck Club *and other books by Asian authors such as Amy Tan. (Center for Asian Arts and Media at Columbia College Chicago, IL)*

> *Having Spanish-language materials opened up the program to so many more people in our community and allowed us to reach non-readers of English-language books. … a director of an outreach center, commented, "Since I've immigrated to this country I haven't read. Now that I have a copy in Spanish I am excited to read again."(Arlington Cultural Affairs, Arlington, VA)*

> *Funds from the Big Read Grant allowed the Concord Library to purchase 175 copies of* Fahrenheit 451 *in Spanish. These were distributed at the library, Monument Futures, a day labor center, and the Monument Crisis Center, a social services organization serving economically disadvantaged clients, predominately Spanish speakers. (Contra Costa County Library, Pleasant Hill, CA)*

Incarcerated Populations

Those who were successful in bringing the Big Read to prisons most often worked through existing prison programs and staff. The Big Read materials, as well as free books, provided tangible contributions to literacy programs in prisons, as well as social organizations that care for victims of abuse and the homeless. Reaching out to include those incarcerated in prisons resulted in new literacy resources being brought into prisons and extended opportunities for prisoners to participate in events—like writing contests—happening in the community outside the facility. In one site, the first-place winner in a high school writing contest was a 17-year-old who was incarcerated in the county jail system. (Los Medanos College, Pittsburg, CA)

Successful involvement for the prison population came about in some sites because of well-planned efforts to hold book discussion groups led by teachers and professors experienced in working with incarcerated populations.

A number of grantees included younger audiences in juvenile correction centers or other facilities in their Big Reads.

> *In addition, the Motheread/Fatheread program administered by the Hawai'i Council for the Humanities, offered family reading programs in three separate prisons using the children's book, Grandfather's Journey, to encourage communication and family empowerment through reading. (Hawai'i Capital Cultural District, Honolulu, HI)*

> *At Graterford Prison, book discussions were held with two groups of 11 inmates, for a total of 22 inmates. A librarian from MCCC contacted the prison, made the arrangements, and sent 30 copies of* To Kill a Mockingbird *along with the NEA Reader's Guides to the prison well in advance of the planned discussion. The discussion was lead by the MCCC librarian and a recently retired Professor of English at the College. The enthusiasm of the inmates and the leaders for the discussions inspired plans to continue this outreach with more book discussions in the future. (Montgomery County Community College Foundation, Blue Bell, PA)*

Grantees were enthusiastic about continuing to build on new partnerships with prisons. Some planned to give copies of the book they weeded from the library collection after The Big Read to the county jail. One grantee advocated including incarcerated populations in community activities rather than devising separate programs.

> *Please consider encouraging Big Read Communities to reach out to the incarcerated in their communities rather than starting a separate prisons program, or in addition to having a program tailored to the prisons. Those on the inside are encouraged when they participate in a program that is going on outside the walls too. We involved prisons, our jail, and a juvenile detention center. Buy-in at the higher level of these organizations is important and I was fortunate to have that. (Hudson Area Association Library, Hudson, NY)*

A survey comment from one participant confirmed the value of including incarcerated populations like any other outreach audience, rather than creating separate programs. Being part of The Big Read, he explained, gave him the feeling, unusual in his circumstances, that he was still part of the community.

Seniors

Grantees reported effective partnerships with retirement centers, social service agencies for seniors, and local Councils on Aging. Bringing programming into senior residential centers—and getting reader's guides and books to elderly readers—was effective as was intergenerational programming. Some grantees found that elderly readers were often lapsed readers who enjoyed book-related discussions and activities and a chance to get reacquainted with a book they had read in the past. The chance to share their excitement with younger readers only added to their enjoyment. In Los Angeles, seniors who took the stage with local high school students to present scenes from *The Grapes of Wrath*, directed by Will & Company, shared their memories of Depression-era hardships with immigrant and migrant students familiar with the toll present-day economic adversity takes on families.

Grantees also reported partnering with organizations of retirees who could serve as volunteers for The Big Read (e.g., retired teachers reading in the schools). Providing large print and audio editions of the book, transportation to events, and opportunities to participate (e.g., to record their experiences during the Great Depression) were successful.

> *The screening and discussion program at Mathers Café (a senior citizens' café) in partnership with the Mathers Institute on Aging was our first attempt to present programs geared toward older adults. Nancy Tom, a 73 year old first time filmmaker and a veteran Asian-American activist (as well as the mother of one of* The Joy Luck Club *actresses), presented a touching personal documentary about her mother and their lives living through discrimination against immigrants, women and minorities. The response was overwhelming. (Center for Asian Arts and Media at Columbia College Chicago, IL)*

Military

Some grantees reported their partnerships with the military as being their most successful, others their least, but all sites that engaged the military community indicated that they built important relationships that would lead to further collaboration. The Burlington, New Jersey Council of Boy Scouts, found base librarians to be extremely receptive to partnerships, but public access to the base more complex than anticipated. In their first Big Read (P1C1), Cumberland County, North Carolina, worked with Ft. Bragg and Pope Air Force Base on joint military and community activities, but efforts were thwarted by the deployment of the 82nd Airborne to Iraq. In P2C1, with a prior program's experience, and redeployment, the partnership was very successful.

> *Throckmorton Library at Fort Bragg really reached out to the community this year. The library hosted two successful programs and coordinated with a local junior high school. The post's Public Affairs Office was a crucial link in setting up the visit by Col. Roger King, the Public Affairs officer from Forces Command in Atlanta. Col. King appeared on the panel for "Censorship in Times of War." Several military members from Fort Bragg attended the discussion, which also included a representative from the state chapter of the ACLU. (Friends of the Cumberland Co. Library)*

Like Attleboro, they collected extra books for a Books for Baghdad program, extending the reach of The Big Read.

> *Our Books for Baghdad initiative, for which over 200 books were collected and mailed to appreciative Attleboro servicemen and women in Afghanistan and Iraq, led to collaborating with our city Veterans' Agent and City Hall workers on this ongoing project. (Attleboro Public Library, Attleboro, MA)*

> *BPL worked with Fort Hamilton to present intergenerational programs at the military installation as part of The Big Read. This was helpful to Fort Hamilton staff, who had little experience presenting programs of this sort, and helped build a connection between the Library and the garrison. The process also helped familiarize Fort Hamilton personnel with their local BPL branch, which is especially valuable to children who live at the installation and have few activities available to them there. (Brooklyn Public Library, New York)*

Part Three

THE IMPACT OF THE BIG READ on Communities and Institutions

Overview

Parts Three and Four of this report look beyond the implementation of The Big Read to its perceived impact on communities, organizations, participants—and ultimately on literary reading. Findings are based on survey, case study, and final report feedback from grantees and on postcard, event card, and survey data from participants, including follow-up surveys completed two to three months after the program.

Much of the feedback from grantees about the program's impact on their organizations and communities is qualitative, and much of the feedback from participants comes from those who were already readers. That said, the survey data and rich anecdotal evidence indicate that, overall, The Big Read had a positive impact on communities, often exceeding expectations, often providing the spark program sponsors hoped would reignite an interest in literary reading. The Big Read, grantees said, helped them deepen relationships with existing partners and enlist new partners, and gave them something exciting to offer both. The infusion of funding and resources helped grantees reach out to new patrons, across generational, institutional, economic, ethnic, and geographic divides. New programming and publicity helped them raise awareness of "the importance of reading" as well as the level of "discourse about literature." In some cases, The Big Read was "changing the conversation" about racism, censorship, the trauma of war, the hardships of immigrants, and other issues portrayed in The Big Read books, even offering a "tonic" for local tensions and debates. Many grantees said citizens were "hungry for this kind of discussion," "clamoring for more," and asking, "When is the next Big Read?"

Grantees also indicated that they were more successful with women, avid and older readers, and existing patrons than with men, reluctant readers, and younger or more diverse populations; participant data that skew this way would appear to confirm their observations. At the same time, grantees reported active outreach to new audiences, as well as new faces at events. The many optimistic stories told in narrative reports about changes in communities and reading audiences, and the percentages of grantees rating their efforts as relatively successful, may reflect a self-reporting bias borne of a sense that local Big Reads inspired an interest in reading even if they did not bring about measurable, verifiable changes among teens, reluctant readers, or other harder to reach audiences. The reader should bear this in mind when reading self-report data. Confident that The Big Read had succeeded in its singular goal of inspiring readers, and quoting a newspaper article voicing the same opinion, one grantee said:

> *The community-wide reading program has been a great success. It achieved its one and only goal: it inspired people to read—individuals, students and parents. (Golden Isles Arts and Humanities Association, Brunswick, GA, quoting* The Brunswick News)

Another confident grantee saw greater benefit in The Big Read's broader support of literature, literacy, and community well-being and development:

> *This initiative, no matter which title is selected and which segment of the population we ultimately attract and no matter which great new collaborations we make, has truly helped to pull our community together. It has helped the Library position itself as a leader in building community, and drawn attention to the "Reading at Risk" report and its subsequent findings. Our community is trying very hard to re-invent itself as a "Learning Community" and get off the bottom of every important list covering economics and quality of life. This national initiative truly has helped us to promote and deliver a consistently excellent series of programs and events for our region. (East Baton Rouge, LA)*

The question may not be whether The Big Read, in its first year and a half, made clear, tangible changes in the numbers of literary readers, but whether it made the kinds of differences in organizations and communities that seed those changes. Put another way: Did the program build enough momentum and capacity among institutions, and inspire enough interest among citizens, to begin to change reading habits and expand the audience of literary readers and public participation in the arts? The following three sections of the report look at these changes.

Sample and Methodology

The evaluation question is what we can say about success and sustainability based on our sample and both the quantitative and qualitative data. Grantee surveys sought feedback on the visibility and capacity organizations gained through The Big Read. Participant surveys sought feedback on the reading-related activities participants engaged in afterward and as a result of the program. We have triangulated responses where possible and coded qualitative data where appropriate.

Grantee Data

Grantees in all three cycles were invited to complete a post-program survey asking them to rate and elaborate on changes in capacity. As Table 40 shows, response rates varied across cycles, with the highest rate in the second cycle and the lowest in the third. Those differences might have arisen because the evaluation was more in sync with implementation in the second cycle and the evaluation team had more contact with grantees. In Cycle 2, the orientation included a presentation and break-out sessions devoted to evaluation, and at the beginning of the cycle, grantees received event cards and postcards and had the option of taking part in an evaluation teleconference held by the NEA, Arts Midwest, and the evaluation team. Cycle 1 also included both the cards and teleconference, but the evaluation did not commence until after approval from

the Office of Management and Budget, three months into the program and after some sites had concluded their Big Reads. In the third cycle, the evaluation team continued to gather grantee and participant surveys, but focused specifically on teens and young adults; no cards were distributed.

Findings are generally reported in aggregate, but because different response rates may skew combined results, discussions include results by cycle and note any differences attributable to programmatic changes, such as the emphasis in P2C1 on expanding teen and young adult audiences. (The numbers of responses are too small to weight responses.) Table 39 shows the number and percentage of survey responses by institution type and how that compares to the type's representation among grantees. Table 40 shows the responses per site, per cycle; and Table 41 provides further breakdowns of the range in responses.

Table 39. Grantee Survey Responses by Institution

Institution Type	Number of Respondents per Type	Percent of Respondent Group	Percent of Institutions among Grantees
Libraries	135	45.5	48.3
Colleges & Universities	38	12.8	17.1
Arts Councils/Agencies	35	11.8	6.0
Organizations that support/promote arts	13	4.4	3.5
Museums	13	4.4	3.5
Arts Centers	12	4.0	5.1
Social Service Organizations	10	3.4	2.2
Community Service Organizations	3	1.0	2.5
Performing Groups or Facilities	8	2.7	2.2
Community Foundations	4	1.4	1.9
Festivals and Cultural series	9	3.0	1.9
Humanities Councils	4	1.4	2.2
Cities	5	1.7	1.6
Media (radio and television)	4	1.4	1.0
Reservations	2	0.7	0.6
Health Care Organizations	2	0.7	0.3
TOTALS	297	99.9	99.9

Table 40. Grantee Survey Response Distribution, Overall and by Cycle

	Number Respondents	Percent of Respondent Group	Number of Sites Represented	Percent of Sites	Range in Responses per Site
P1C1	72	27.3%	52	72.2%	1-7
P1C2	184	57.2%	91	77.8%	1-12
P2C1	41	15.5%	37	29.4%	1-2
Overall Number	297	100.0	180	57.1%	1-12

Table 41. Grantee Survey—Range per Site, per Cycle

Cycle	0 Responses	1-9 Responses	10-19 Responses
P1C1 (N=72)	21	51	0
P1C2 (N=117)	26	90	1 (12)
P2C1 (N=126)	89	37	0

See Part Four, p. 92, for samples and methods for Participant Data

Key Findings, Part Three

- Grantee self-report data indicate that participating in The Big Read increased the visibility of libraries, museums, and other institutions—in the media, among city officials, peers, and schools, and across a wider demographic.
    - 97.4% of the survey respondents, overall, agreed that library visibility had increased as a result of The Big Read; over half, or 53.7%, strongly agreed.
    - Big Read activities also showcased the efforts and services that libraries—and library staff such as youth and young adult librarians—can offer to schools and the community.

- Based on survey responses, grantees gained skills in executing and promoting events and in taking part in national initiatives through The Big Read.
    - Overall, over three-fourths (78.5%) of the respondents said that taking part in The Big Read increased their skills in planning and executing events; three-fourths (73.7%) said The Big Read increased their skills in advertising and promoting events.
    - 85.6% said The Big Read increased their skills in taking part in national initiatives.

- Grantee responses also indicate increased capacity to attract audiences.
    - Around three-fourths of the survey respondents cited increases in their capacity to attract audiences (72.5%), attract *diverse* audiences (70.3%), and meet the needs of target populations (73.7%). There also seemed to be an association beyond that which could be expected to occur by chance between having a certain number or critical mass of partners—seven or more—and perceived success in bringing diverse audiences together.
    - The largest concentration of ratings, between 46% and 51%, were in the middle or "modest increase" range, with between one in three or one in five reporting either "no change" or "substantial change."

- There was general agreement among survey respondents about perceived changes in attitudes about reading and expanded audiences for literature and the arts.

- 91.7% of the respondents said The Big Read changed attitudes about literary reading. Three-fourths agreed; one in five strongly agreed.
- Almost all respondents—98.2%—said the program expanded the audience for arts and literature-related events; a third of these (32.5%) strongly agreed.

- 86.6% said The Big Read expanded the young-adult audience. Grantees in P2C1, which also emphasized efforts to reach this audience, registered the highest levels of agreement (97.0%) with this item. Overall, fewer grantees (16.3%) expressed strong agreement.

- Similarly high percentages—89.8%—said The Big Read helped bring diverse groups together to talk about literature: half agreed, a third strongly so.

- Grantee data also shows perceived capacity in forming and sustaining coalitions.
  - 98.6% agreed that The Big Read laid the groundwork for partnerships to boost interest in literature; almost two-thirds (63.2%) strongly agreed.
  - 88.6% cited an increase in their organization's awareness of organizations with which they might collaborate, and approximately half (53.0%) saw the increase as substantial. 83.5% cited an increase in their ability to build coalitions.

- Grantees reported plans to make reading initiatives ongoing through "Little Reads," alternating local and Big Reads, or new alliances, to make community reading a year-round activity, and to increase access to literary reading and arts activities by providing free events to the public.

- Partnerships with institutions championing the performing or visual arts were perceived as highly successful because music, theatre, and visual arts provided effective and varied ways to engage readers and non-readers alike in literature.

- Libraries or consortia that serve rural and often widespread areas see The Big Read as a way to pool and leverage resources to expand awareness and access to them.

SECTION 9: THE ROLE OF LIBRARIES, MUSEUMS, AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS

What impact does The Big Read have on participating institutions' visibility and role in the community?

Increases in Visibility

The first remark made by case-study grantees asked about The Big Read's impact was that it increased visibility and had what one grantee called a "catalytic" effect on public relations. On this subject, there was also almost unanimous agreement among survey respondents (N=270):

- 97.4% of the survey respondents, overall, agreed that library visibility had increased as a result of The Big Read. Over half, or 53.7%, strongly agreed. Among the scaled items on the grantee survey, this item garnered some of the most positive responses.

- Levels of overall agreement stood at 94% or higher by cycle, with means at 3.4 and 3.6. There was a 15-17 percentage-point increase in respondents expressing strong agreement from the first to the second and third cycles. (See Table 42 and Figure 9.)

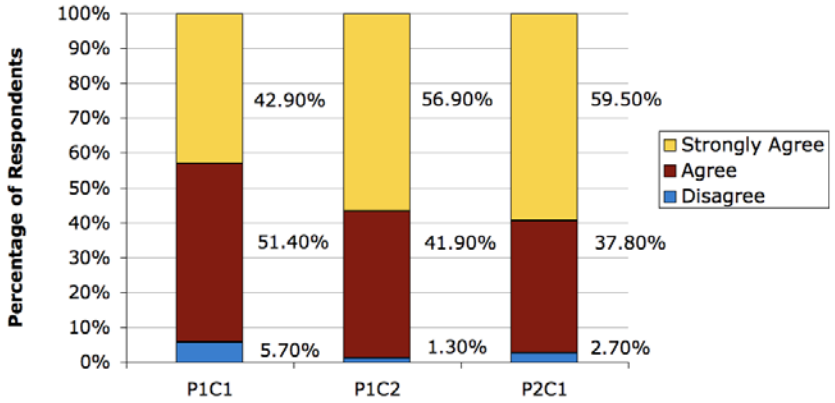
Table 42. The Big Read's Impact on Visibility

The Big Read…	Cycle	Percent Disagree	Percent Agree	Percent Strongly Agree	Mean*	SD
increased the visibility of the library, library programs	P1C1 (n=70)	5.7	51.4	42.9	3.4	0.6
	P1C2 (n=160)	1.3	41.9	56.9	3.6	0.7
	P2C1 (n=37)	2.7	37.8	59.5	3.6	0.7
	Overall (N=270)	**2.6%**	**43.7**	**53.7**	**3.6**	**0.6**

Source: Grantee Survey

*Means calculated on a 4-point scale, where 1=strongly disagree, 4=strongly agree. Because respondents included grantees and key partners, and not everyone answered all questions, percentages were calculated based on the number of those answering the question (n) rather than the whole respondent group.

Figure 9. Levels of Agreement, across Cycles, on Visibility



In addition to providing examples (shared below) of how institutions gained status and visibility and how this exposure might serve future efforts, grantees attributed increased attention to a wide range of successful events, including highly publicized and well-attended Kick-off events

described in Part Two. They also cited the theatrical events and appearances by well-known, high-profile authors and speakers, whom institutions could not have hosted without Big Read funding, such as: author Stella Pope Duarte and Pulitzer-Prize winning author, Junot Díaz; Ray Bradbury biographer, Sam Weller, and Harper Lee biographer, Charles Shields; F. Scott Fitzgerald scholar, Matthew Bruccoli, Valerie, Boyd, and Duku Anokye; Mary Badham, who played Scout in the movie version of *To Kill a Mockingbird*; and other scholars and speakers from nearby universities or organizations.

Grantees often said that greater visibility and status came with being part of a national program and its high-quality promotional materials, CDs, and Reader's and Teacher's Guides. Some grantees pointed out that the reverse was also true: participation in The Big Read raised local awareness of the work of the NEA. "I don't think the NEA had a presence in this region before," said one grantee. "That was great—to talk about it and what it does and the importance of the arts."

Free books raised visibility among audiences who may not typically have frequented the library, museums, or other organizations.

Sustained Visibility

Media Presence

Grantees said they "advertised in ways that we never have before" during The Big Read, in the library itself, in local and regional papers, on TV and radio, and in partner venues. (See also Section 4, p. 31). The month-long "buzz" about the program not only kept library programming "out there" but also gave grantees valuable media contacts and marketing ideas.

This presence extended beyond The Big Read, often by popular demand. In Canton, Illinois, the radio station invited local volunteers to continue their daily mid-day readings, which included Big Read novels and other literary classics. In Cumberland County, North Carolina, the weekly radio spots and newspaper columns devoted to reading and library activities, both instituted during The Big Read, became regular features. In Santa Fe, New Mexico, an on-air book club launched during The Big Read became a standard part of the radio station's programming schedule. According to The Big Read coordinator, "Each week the book club is on the air, it reaches a potential audience of 60,000 people in the San Luis Valley and down into northern New Mexico." In Houston, Texas, the local PBS station asked the Harris County Public Libraries to partner with them in promoting their new children's show, *Super WHY!*, by holding *Super WHY!* storytimes.

Status among Peers

In describing the value and success of Big Read partnerships, grantees noted that other organizations "now know who they are and what they offer" and that "they're open for business" for partnerships. Comments suggested that this was true both in rural areas where arts

partnerships and literary networks are rare and in populated areas where they are more common. For example, the D.C. Humanities Council, serving an area full of arts and literary institutions and offerings, said The Big Read increased its visibility "among peers" who now see them as a potential partner for literacy, cultural, and civic initiatives. Organizers said The Big Read "put a new face on the Steinbeck Center" and increased its visibility among other organizations as well as patrons. Some organizations also felt they acquired new status as a model program, the "conduit" for other efforts.

> *We have been serving the West Valley of the Phoenix Metro area for over 15 years. This grant put us in a position to be a leading organization of a movement that reached across the county and introduced our name to many new faces. We were honored by many partners with the praise that "this is how One Book Arizona should be done." The Big Read also showed our existing audience our versatility and our reach to encompass all arts, including the literary. Because of The Big Read we are now talking with arts and cultural partners about planning a Fringe Festival for 2010—and event we will initiate and oversee. (West Valley Arts Council, AZ)*

Status with "Higher ups" in the Community

According to grantees, The Big Read helped them "demonstrate their value to city organizations." When local officials and dignitaries—mayors, Congressmen, and other state and federal elected officials, Chamber of Commerce presidents, the local Bar Association, school superintendents—promoted The Big Read, they also promoted libraries and partnering institutions as valuable resources and as strategic partners for civic initiatives. For some libraries, increased advocacy and visibility led to more funding and successful referendums. In Caldwell, New Jersey, the proceeds from a Mayor's Gala, heavily promoted in the local newspaper, went to the library. The Ameagy Bank, a first-time partner, became a Friend of the Library for a Harris County, Texas, library branch, committing $500 to sponsor their Hispanic Heritage Festival. In Peoria, Illinois, a library referendum passed shortly The Big Read; in Ironwood Michigan, (see sidebar), the exposure the library gained through The Big Read seemed to bode well for efforts to change tax rates to generate funds for library renovations.

The Big Read demonstrated the value the Ironwood Carnegie Library and its two partnering libraries bring to their communities. Economically and politically, said The Big Read coordinator, it has been difficult for libraries in Michigan, and especially in the U.P. The Big Read provided a "very tangible way that we showed our value." The Big Read was also timely, increasing the library's visibility at a time when Ironwood was trying to get a millage passed to renovate the library. On many levels, it was necessary to "show how a library can bring a community together and be a fulcrum to bring together those community partnerships."

Relationships with Schools

Libraries reported that The Big Read helped formalize and solidify school relationships that had been cordial but often casual. Library staff became better aware of school schedules, reading lists and curriculum planning, literacy programs, and student book clubs. School personnel—teachers, administrators, curriculum and literacy directors, media specialists—gained a better understanding of what libraries offered and how they could support their instructional efforts. Increased awareness of library services also extended to higher education.

As part of The Big Read—and afterward—library staff made presentations or provided training (for example, on literature finder databases) to faculty members, school district officials, and school boards, often taking their services "directly to the teachers." Grantees reported that The Big Read also "opened the door" to offer services to disciplines other than English, including fine arts, science, and social studies. Although it was often libraries that offered services to schools and built awareness, other Big Read institutions did as well, such as the Asian Culture Center in Chicago:

> *Working with the Chicago Public School Office afforded us the opportunity to reach out to a large number of teachers, school librarians and administrators. The educators' workshop was very effective. Not only did it bring a group of teachers together to brainstorm and exchange ideas and concerns, it also gave us the chance to meet and work with teachers on a one-on-one basis.*

Big Read activities often showcased the talents and efforts of youth librarians, who, for example, helped teachers and school librarians select companion books for middle school and younger readers, coordinated activities between schools and after-school or library teen reading groups and teen advocacy groups, and held writing workshops for younger readers. (See Part Five, p. 112 for further discussion.)

Visibility across a Broader Demographic and Geographic Area

Previous sections included discussions of increased outreach to underserved audiences and areas. Among those who realized through The Big Read what libraries could offer and how they could together serve audiences were hospitals, hospices, community service organizations, literacy groups, Hispanic culture groups, and ESL programs.

Libraries are such a reliable and long-standing presence in the community as stewards of books and learning that, according to some grantees, they are taken for granted. The Big Read, they say, not only reinforced the library's role in the community but also redefined it in some ways. Now, more community members, elected officials, businesses, and other organizations know what libraries have to offer, and they have replaced their old images of libraries as book repositories with updated images of the library as information center, book club destination, event and exhibit venue, technology center, and partner in local initiatives in literature, literacy, and the arts.

SECTION 10: CAPACITY BUILDING

To what extent did The Big Read build capacity that could be leveraged for future initiatives?

Background

In examining what grantee organizations took away from The Big Read, it may be useful to look at what they brought to it, which was a wide range of experience. Among the survey respondents, who represent just over half of all grantees in the first three cycles, 85% had sponsored a local arts, literature, or community reading program; just over a third had worked on other NEA or federally-funded efforts.

What grantees had not done—and what The Big Read funding and resources helped them do—was orchestrate a focused, community-wide, multi-partner effort continuously in the public eye. With the exception of the ten Big Read pilot sites[22], this was the case in rural as well as more densely populated areas. The Vigo County Library in Terre Haute, Indiana, for example, had held five successful one-book programs. Forming coalitions was part of their mission, and they had often worked with schools and Indiana State University and had an active partner in the newspaper. Their budget, however, did not include publicity in multiple outlets so their efforts did not get wide exposure. Collaboration was also part of the institutional mission of the Spoon River Community College in Fulton Country, Illinois, which had, on a variety of educational and cultural programs, partnered with the Parlin-Ingersoll Library, local retirement groups, and the local prison, but they had not brought these groups—along with churches, businesses, schools, alternative schools, and other segments of the community—together to read.

In the more densely populated area along the I-95 corridor and the Long Island Sound, where the cities of Bridgeport, Shelton, Norwalk, and Stamford came together in the Southwestern Connecticut Regional Collaborative, individual units and libraries had brought literary initiatives to segments of Fairfield County's nearly 1 million residents, but they had not pooled efforts to serve the entire area. Seldom had they involved city governments, and never had they had a visit from a First Lady to enhance promotion. In the mid-size city of Fayetteville, North Carolina, the Cumberland County Library had served an increasingly diverse community with literary festivals, multiple book clubs, mobile outreach services, electronic resources, a foreign language center and bi-lingual story times. They had not, however, promoted widely, brought in scholars and speakers, or engaged in formal partnerships with area schools, museums, universities, and two military bases, Pope Air Force Base and Ft. Bragg—all in a single effort.

Arts and literary centers sometimes had higher profiles and wider audiences, but they had not engaged in the brand of community collaboration called for in The Big Read. Will & Company, a not-for-profit theatre ensemble based in Los Angeles, had, for two decades, made Shakespeare

[22] See http://www.nea.gov/news/news05/BigReadAnnounce.html for a list of pilot sites.

and other classics accessible to under-represented communities locally and nationally, with in-school programs for first through twelfth-grade students and residences in colleges and universities around the country. They had done far less in community collaborations that brought multiple agencies and generations together to "connect new audiences with a great piece of literature." The Cabin in Boise, Idaho (a retreat where local book clubs gather and young authors launch their first books) had brought audiences to hear well-known authors—including Big Read authors Marilynne Robinson and Amy Tan—and over 7,000 Idaho students to take part in their model writing programs and summer writing camps. They had not typically taken their expertise out into the community to engage schools, Idaho State University, business groups, a military base, and patrons of city markets and cafes in discussions about a book.

As The Big Read coordinator for the Libraries of Eastern Oregon—the largest library consortium in the continental U.S., offering collections, exhibits, technology delivery, and nationally recognized programming—said. "It's not like we are 'newbies'—we have done programs and brought out pretty good partners." The difference, she said, is that The Big Read "engaged the entire community and people." For the consortium, that meant the Kam Wah Chung Museum, the National Guard, state parks, Eastern Oregon State University, and the communities served by the region's 47 public libraries.

The Libraries of Eastern Oregon consortium has brought rotating exhibits from the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry; conducted a pilot program of folk art exhibits and programs funded by the Oregon Art Commission; partnered with the Oregon Community Foundation to provide telescopes and GPS units for patron check-out; worked with NASA and PSU's Cascadia Meteorite Lab to bring more than 50 meteorite programs to the state; received a USDA Rural Development grant to supply 13 libraries with videoconferencing units and eBay business development workshops; and partnered with astronomy columnist Bob Duke to provide stargazing programs at LEO libraries.

"…but this was different," said The Big Read coordinator, "I think because it engaged the entire community and people. The project made us much more credible and recognized in the region—much more so than anything we had done before. It allowed us to go to places we'd never been before. It galvanized support for the library, for LEO and for community reading itself."

Capacity for Holding and Promoting Events

Grantees also indicated that participating in The Big Read gave them valuable operational skills. Again, comments indicated that starting points varied. For some institutions, the effort was largely unprecedented: Grantees called The Big Read "the largest event our library has ever hosted," the "largest adult program handled by the library," and a "growing process, giving us a whole new skill set." For others, the extra funding and resources allowed them to build on existing staff and established skills, repertoires, and media contacts. The fairly even distribution between "modest" and "substantial" increases appears to reflect this range (see Table 43).

- Over three-fourths (78.5%) of the respondents said that taking part in The Big Read increased their skills in planning and executing events

- Perceived increases in skills in planning and promoting events were slightly but consistently higher in the first and third cycles, based on overall means and percentages of those indicating modest or substantial increases.

- Three-fourths of the respondents (73.7%) said The Big Read increased their organizations' skills in advertising and promoting events.

- A large majority of grantees—85.6%, overall, said that The Big Read increased their skills in taking part in national initiatives. The percentage of those citing substantial increases was highest, or just under two-thirds (61%), in Cycle 3.

Table 43. The Big Read's Impact on Planning, Promotion, and Partnerships

To what extent has The Big Read increased your organization's:	Cycle	Percent No change	Percent Modest Increase	Percent Substantial increase	Percent Modest + Substantial	Mean*	SD
skills in planning or executing events?	P1C1 (n=70)	12.9	47.1	40.0	87.1	2.3	0.7
	P1C2 (n=183)	25.1	36.1	38.8	74.9	2.1	0.8
	P2C1 (n=41)	19.5	26.8	53.7	80.5	2.3	0.8
	Overall (N=298)	**21.5**	**37.6**	**40.9**	**78.5**	**2.2**	**0.8**
skills in advertising or promoting events?	P1C1 (n=69)	21.7	39.1	39.1	78.2	2.2	0.8
	P1C2 (n=183)	29.0	41.0	30.1	71.1	2.0	0.8
	P2C1 (n=41)	19.5	17.1	63.4	80.5	2.4	1.0
	Overall (N=297)	**26.3**	**37.0**	**36.7**	**73.7**	**2.1**	**0.8**
skills in taking part in national initiatives?	P1C1 (n=70)	7.1	37.1	55.7	92.8	2.6	0.6
	P1C2 (n=149)	15.9	34.4	49.7	84.1	2.4	0.7
	P2C1 (n=41)	19.5	19.5	61.0	80.5	2.4	0.7
	Overall (N=(298)	**14.4**	**32.9**	**52.7**	**85.6**	**2.5**	**0.7**

Source: Grantee Survey
*Means calculated on a 3-point scale, 1=no change, 2=modest increase, 3=substantial increase

Leveraging Skills and Contacts

Additional comments from grantees further defined these skills and the ways they could be applied or leveraged for future initiatives.

Promotional Outlets

Grantees' comments on the value of promotional resources and media have been shared elsewhere in this report. In addition to new media outlets, grantees reported that, through The Big Read, they also learned of other places where they could "get the word out." Some grantees said they learned the value of "involving all ages in a promotion," children, high school, college and adult. They also saw the value of promoting efforts at offices, corporations, and local clubs and professional groups that were "interested in future collaborations," not just as sponsors but as partners with genuine interest in expanding audiences for literature and the arts and improving literacy. One grantee also discovered that there were foreign businesspeople living in their area with an interest in arts programming and partnerships.

Teamwork within and across Institutions

A number of grantees explained that, typically, library staff had discrete areas of focus—community outreach, marketing, young adult fiction. The effort and events involved in The Big Read inspired or required them to cross internal boundaries, pool efforts, and "blend units." In some cases, grantees also reported that this highlighted the skills of certain departments or units—e.g., marketing managers were more involved in programming decisions, young adult librarians worked more closely with outreach directors—and built internal capacity.

Grantees also reported that a teamwork approach built skills and relationships outside their institutions. Even in cases where grantees and partners had a history of working together on programming, they were "unaccustomed to teaming on promotional activities." In many cases this cross-pollination paired libraries with other institutions, but in some it involved "library systems working together with very different internal, financial and customer service structures," which "was challenging but built a strong foundation for future collaboration" (Aurora Pubic Library, Aurora, IL).

Understanding Audiences and Accountability

According to one grantee, they became more adept at providing "what the audience wants." Another grantee noted that the sheer number of events, the expanded efforts to reach new populations, and the evaluations they conducted as part of The Big Read helped them better plan events and parcel out resources. Multiple events for and increased contact with new audiences allowed these audiences—e.g., Hispanic audiences, teens and young adults—to "make their needs known."

Some grantees also reported that, on a broader level, "Being part of a national initiative made us more accountable in our programming, reporting and advertising efforts." Another said, "I learned to enter evaluation items and calendar items as they happened. This was our second Big Read and I was more prepared for the evaluation and had a better concept of target audiences. We also used the forum more to share ideas." Several grantees also said that holding a Big Read stretched their staff and resources to the limit. Some who relied on volunteers said they could not have done a Big Read without a month or more of full-time volunteers. Grantees contemplating or having held a second Big Read reported that they had learned how to "keep the number of events manageable, especially when working with a small staff."

Capacity to Attract Audiences and Change Attitudes

While almost three-fourths of the survey respondents cited increases in their capacity to attract audiences, those increases were not as pronounced as those for other outcomes reported here. Ratings and comments were consistent with findings reported in Part Two, which quoted a grantee saying there was "more work to do" with respect to outreach to diverse audiences. (See Table 44.)

- Almost three-fourths of the respondents said that The Big Read increased their capacity to attract audiences (72.5%), attract diverse audiences (70.3%), and meet the needs of target populations (73.7%). With one exception (P1C2), between a fourth and a third of the respondents in all cycles considered the increases in all three categories to be substantial.

- The largest concentration of ratings, between 46% and 51%, were in the middle or "modest increase" range for all three questions, with between one in three or one in five reporting either "no change" or "substantial change." Means were at or around 2.0 for all three questions and cycles, with more P2C1 respondents citing a "modest increase" for the first question, which was related to capacity to attract audiences.

Table 44. The Big Read's Impact on Building Audiences

To what extent has The Big Read increased your organization's:	Cycle	Percent No change	Percent Modest Increase	Percent Substantial increase	Percent Modest + Substantial	Mean*	SD
Capacity to attract audiences or build membership?	P1C1 (n=70)	20.0	45.7	34.3	80.0	2.1	0.7
	P1C2 (n=183	31.2	44.3	24.6	68.9	2.0	0.8
	P2C1 (n=41)	22.0	51.2	26.8	78.0	2.0	0.7
	Overall (N=294)	**27.5**	**45.6**	**26.9**	**72.5**	**2.0**	**0.7**
Capacity to attract *diverse* audiences?	P1C1 (n=70)	21.4	44.3	34.3	78.6	2.1	0.7
	P1C2 (n=180)	32.8	45.6	21.7	67.3	1.9	0.7
	P2C1 (n=39)	28.2	43.6	28.2	71.8	2.0	0.8
	Overall (N=289)	**29.7**	**44.7**	**25.6**	**70.3**	**2.0**	**0.7**
Ability to meet the needs of target populations?	P1C1 (n=70)	18.6	54.3	27.1	81.4	2.1	0.7
	P1C2 (n=181)	29.3	52.0	18.8	70.8	1.9	0.7
	P2C1 (n=41)	24.4	46.3	29.3	75.6	2.0	0.7
	Overall (N=296)	**26.7**	**51.4**	**22.0**	**73.7**	**2.0**	**0.7**

Source: Grantee Survey
*Means calculated on a 4-point scale, where 1=strongly disagree, 4=strongly agree

As noted in Parts One and Two, we conducted a set of correlation analyses to see it the number of partner organizations had an impact on grantees' perceptions about their success and increased capacity. Our analyses showed that, using the items listed in Tables 40 and 41, there did seem to be an association beyond that which could be expected to occur by chance between having seven or more partners and perceived increases in capacity to attract diverse audiences.

Survey respondents also agreed that The Big Read changed attitudes about reading and expanded audiences for literature and the arts. (See Figure 10 and Table 45.) Relatively few grantees expressed disagreement with any item, but concentrations were greater in the "agree" than in the "strongly agree" columns.

- 91.7% of the respondents said The Big Read changed attitudes about literary reading. Three-fourths agreed; one in five strongly agreed.

- Almost all—98.2%—said the program expanded the audience for arts and literature-related events; a third of these (32.5%) strongly agreed with the statement.

- 86.6% said The Big Read expanded the young-adult audience. Grantees in P2C1, which emphasized efforts to reach this audience, registered the highest levels of agreement (97.0%). Overall, fewer grantees (16.3%) expressed strong agreement.

- Similarly high percentages—89.8%—said The Big Read helped bring diverse groups together to talk about literature: half agreed, a third strongly so.

Figure 10. Grantees' Ratings of The Big Read's Impact on Audiences and Literary Reading

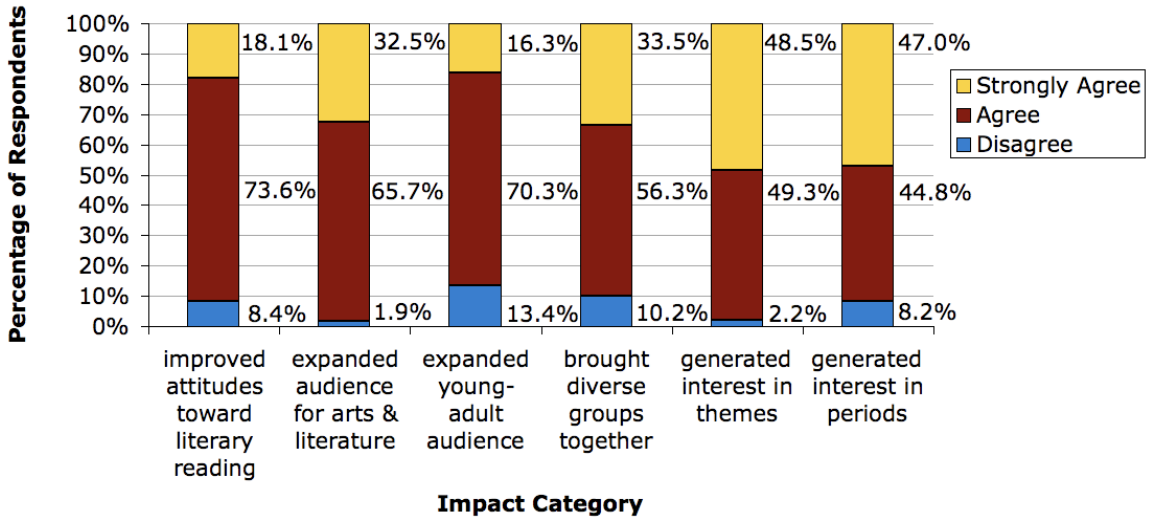


Table 45. The Big Read's Impact on Reading Habits and Interests

The Big Read…	Cycle	Percent Strongly disagree/ Disagree	Percent Agree	Percent Strongly Agree	Mean*	SD
changed/improved attitudes about literary reading.	P1C1 (n=71)	5.6	76.1	18.3	3.1	0.5
	P1C2 (n=147)	10.6	70.7	18.7	3.1	0.6
	P2C1 (n=41)	6.5	83.9	9.7	3.0	0.4
	Overall (N=227)	**8.4**	**73.6**	**18.1**	**3.1**	**0.5**
expanded the audience for arts and literature-related events.	P1C1 (n=70)	2.9	71.0	26.1	3.2	0.5
	P1C2 (n=147)	1.9	62.1	36.0	3.3	0.5
	P2C1 (n=41)	0	75.0	25.0	3.3	0.4
	Overall (N=268)	**1.9**	**65.7**	**32.5**	**3.3**	**0.5**
expanded the young-adult audience for arts and literature-related events.	P1C1 (n=70)	19.1	66.2	14.7	3.0	0.6
	P1C2 (n=147)	12.6	69.9	17.5	3.0	0.6
	P2C1 (n=41)	3.0	84.9	12.1	3.1	0.4
	Overall (N=246)	**13.4**	**70.3**	**16.3**	**3.0**	**0.6**
helped bring diverse groups together to talk about literature.	P1C1 (n=70)	10.0	52.9	37.1	3.3	0.6
	P1C2 (n=147)	8.8	59.9	31.3	3.2	0.6
	P2C1 (n=41)	17.7	50.0	32.4	3.1	0.8
	Overall (N=258)	**10.2**	**56.3**	**33.5**	**3.2**	**0.6**
generated an interest in the themes and issues portrayed in The Big Read book.	P1C1 (n=70)	1.5	52.2	46.4	3.4	0.5
	P1C2 (n=147)	2.4	47.9	49.7	3.5	0.5
	P2C1 (n=41)	2.7	54.1	43.2	3.4	0.6
	Overall (N=258)	**2.2**	**49.3**	**48.5**	**3.5**	**0.5**
generated an interest in [local connections to] the historical periods portrayed in The Big Read book.	P1C1 (n=70)	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
	P1C2 (n=147)	7.7	44.8	47.6	3.4	0.6
	P2C1 (n=41)	10.8	43.2	46.0	3.4	0.7
	Overall (N=258)	**8.2**	**44.8**	**47.0**	**3.4**	**0.6**

Source: Grantee Survey
*Means calculated on a scale of 1-4, where 1=strongly disagree and 4=strongly agree.

Confirmation at the Circulation Desk

Case study contacts told stories about The Big Read "buzz" heard throughout libraries—during "chats around circulation desks" and "mini book discussions at the counter." Houston's Harris County Library and Fayetteville, North Carolina's Cumberland County Library also provided circulation data confirming Big Read activity.

The Big Read resulted in a big increase in the number of events and attendees during a typically slow library month. In April, 25,252 people attended events at Harris County libraries; that number increased to 60,000 during The Big Read in May. The average number of attendees each month is 29,322. Harris County also saw a rise in library card applications, with 21,556 new cards issued between April and June, and an overall increase in circulation of 2% during the month of May. While June is traditionally one of busiest months of the year, this year the library experienced an overall decline—in contrast to the surge in May, due largely to The Big Read.

During April, Their Eyes Were Watching God circulated 522 times at the main Cumberland County, N.C. Library; in May, June, and July, 88 times. Overall during The Big Read, the seven-library system recorded 1,271 uses: the book circulated 1,185 times, and the audio version, 86 times. Early in the program, librarians made the book a 7-day rather than the normal 3-week checkout, and waived any late fees. For April 2007 (The Big Read month), programming for all age groups was up 44.43% over April 2006—which, according to The Big Read coordinator, "can be directly linked to the additional Big Read programs and the tremendous amount of publicity the library received for this project." The coordinator also cited a "huge jump in programming for children, teens and adults," though they did not report that separately. A reception with local artists and jazz musicians drew 250 people, the largest attendance ever recorded for an adult program at the library's north regional branch.

- *Total Items Borrowed (+5.1%)*
- *Children's Programs (+6.4%); Audience (+22.7%)*
- *Teen Programs (+169.1%); Audience (+231.5%)*
- *Adult Programs (+26.5%); Audience (+64.5%)*
- *Total Programs (+20.2%; Audience (+37.9%)*
- *Meeting & Conference Room Use (+26.0%); Audience (+41.9%)*
- *Total Active Library Cards (+14.5%)*
- *Information Questions Answered (+10.9)*
- *Public Computer Use – (+20.5%)*
- *Electronic Database Searches – (+398.0%)*

(From the FY2007 Annual Report, Cumberland County Library, Fayetteville, NC)

Libraries often reported increases in circulation in their reports to Arts Midwest, but differences in how they track and report that data made aggregating their figures difficult. Not all libraries have data management or archiving systems to track circulation. Others said adding books to collections during The Big Read month, then taking them out of circulation produced misleading figures.

Ratings and Observations of Repeat Grantees

Reviews of the numbers of partners, events, attendees, and book discussions grantees reported the second time around and their survey responses show no clear trends: The numbers of partners generally stayed the same, again in the nine to 14 range. Some grantees that expanded the service area held more events, but several held fewer, suggesting that they were overly ambitious in their first programs. Attendance figures also both rose and fell. Interestingly, ratings for the visibility and capacity acquired or coalitions established were stable: grantees were mostly positive, though not resoundingly more positive in P2C1 responses. Comments again indicated that partnerships were successful, building on a solid foundation laid earlier. Grantees remained in the mid-range in ratings of their success with diverse audiences, again indicating modest success but work left to do. Comments emphasized creative, energetic outreach, through former or newfound partners.

SECTION 11: SUSTAINABLE CHANGES AND PARTNERSHIPS

What evidence suggests that Big Read efforts and partnerships are sustainable?

Capacity to Build Coalitions

As noted in Part One, 90% of the grantees and partners completing the survey considered their Big Read partnerships to be a success, and 89% thought they would lead to future collaboration. Grantee survey respondents expressed much the same confidence about building coalitions (see Tables 43 and 44). Responses were generally similar across items and across cycles, with somewhat more P1C2 respondents noting "no change" in their ability to build coalitions.

- 98.6% agreed that The Big Read laid the groundwork for partnerships to boost interest in literature; almost two-thirds (63.2%) strongly agreed (item not included in P1C1 survey).

- 88.6% cited an increase in their organization's awareness of organizations with which they might collaborate, and approximately half (53.0%) saw the increase as substantial. A similarly high percentage (83.5%) cited an increase in their ability to build coalitions.

Table 46. Groundwork for Future Collaborations

The Big Read…	Cycle	Percent Disagree	Percent Agree	Percent Strongly Agree	Mean*	SD
Laid the groundwork for future collaborations to boost an interest in literature.	P1C1	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
	P1C2 (n=169)	1.8	34.3	63.9	3.6	0.7
	P2C1 (n=40)	0	40.0	60.0	3.6	0.7
	Overall (N=212)	**1.4**	**35.4**	**63.2**	**3.6**	**0.5**

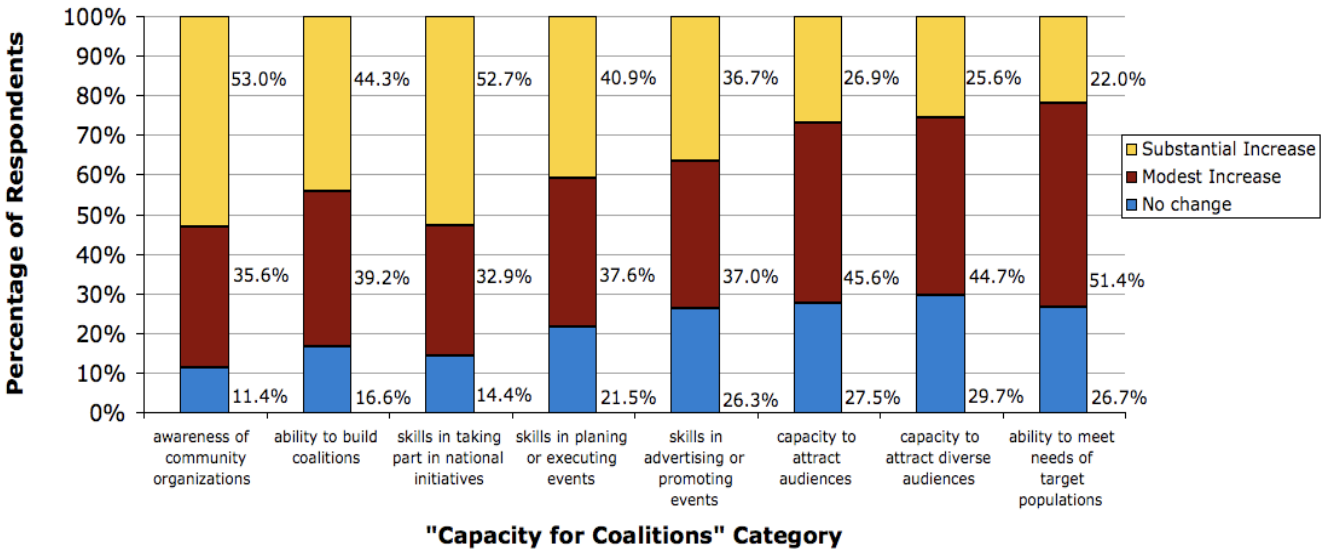
Source: Grantee Survey
*Means calculated on a 4-point scale, where 1=strongly disagree, 4=strongly agree

Table 47. Capacity for Community Coalitions

To what extent has The Big Read increased your organization's:	Cycle	Percent No change	Percent Modest Increase	Percent Substantial increase	Percent Modest + Substantial	Mean*	SD
awareness of community organizations for future collaborations?	P1C1 (n=70)	7.1	44.3	48.6	92.9	2.4	0.6
	P1C2 (n=149)	12.8	31.5	55.7	87.2	2.4	0.7
	P2C1 (n=41)	12.2	34.2	53.7	87.9	2.4	0.7
	Overall (N=260)	**11.4**	**35.6**	**53.0**	**88.6**	**2.4**	**0.7**
ability to build coalitions?	P1C1 (n=68)	8.8	47.1	44.1	91.2	2.4	0.6
	P1C2 (n=183)	20.2	35.0	44.8	79.8	2.3	0.8
	P2C1 (n=41)	12.2	46.3	41.5	87.8	2.3	0.7
	Overall (N=296)	**16.6**	**39.2**	**44.3**	**83.5**	**2.3**	**0.7**

Source: Grantee Survey
*Means calculated on a 3-point scale, 1=no change, 2=modest increase, 3=substantial increase

Figure 11. Changes in Grantees' Capacity for Coalitions



Comments again showed that experience varied—some grantees gained new partners and skills; some took advantage of well-established partnerships and structures. In both cases, The Big Read had a multiplier effect, increasing capacity and constituencies for all partners. Grantees also noted that benefits accrued to both their organizations and the community: "[partnering] made us realize that The Big Read is as much about creating community as it is about reading and teaching Steinbeck," "we created a partnership that will continue on for the good of the community."

> *The partnership between Arlington Cultural Affairs and Arlington Public Library was productive on many levels and exemplified the best aspects of collaboration. Working together to design, promote, and implement Big Read programs extended the capacity of each organization…in the kinds of programming we do, our partners and program venues, and our ability to promote programs. The benefits of the partnership will extend beyond this particular program…we have already begun to collaborate on upcoming programs. (Arlington Cultural Affairs Division, Arlington, VA)*

Comments also included other indications that partnerships and initiatives begun during The Big Read would continue, through "Little Reads," alternating local and Big Reads, or new alliances. Together We Read in western North Carolina, and the Hartford Public Library in Connecticut now alternate, seasonally, between The Big Read books and contemporary or regional titles. The Peninsula Players in Wisconsin plan to enliven the cold, winter off-season with Big Reads. Following their first Big Read, partners in southeastern Virginia formed the Virginia Peninsula Literary Consortium to provide free literary events to the public and help level the playing field so everyone can have these experiences.

Other broad-based sustainable partnerships included:

Partnerships Combining Literary and Literacy Initiatives

Although the link is a natural one, grantees were pleased to find partners among local literacy groups, especially family literacy groups. Some grantees, like the Education Department of the Bands of Odawa Indians, were drawn to The Big Read because it reinforced their own focus on literacy and provided an opportunity to work toward increased literacy with other community organizations. Some sites, like Peoria, Illinois, drew on their literacy volunteers and tutors during their Big Read implementation and invited the manager of the state's literacy programs to be a keynote speaker. A Big Read partner from the Barnes & Noble bookstore saw the program as a natural outgrowth of existing efforts: "We already partner with other literacy groups and the schools in particular but everything we do is a learning experience and this project exposed us to new partners to promote literacy" (West Valley Arts Council, AZ). Other grantees, too, saw the link as a vital one for the community:

> *The scope of The Big Read demanded that we partner with neighborhood associations, merchants associations, our local university, our neighborhood library branches, and with our middle and high schools. Just the forging of these partnerships has been productive—we feel they are a basis for on-going collaboration for literacy and community development in the future. (Harbel Community Foundation, Baltimore, MD)*

Partnerships Linking Literature and the Arts

The observation that Big Read grantees cited strong benefits arising from their partnerships may seem to belabor the obvious—The Big Read is, after all, a partnership between the NEA and IMLS. But a number of grantees from both areas found the partnerships to be highly successful because music, theatre, and visual and other literary arts provided effective and varied ways to engage readers and non-readers alike in literature. African Voices, for example, partnered with the New York Public Library's Schomburg Center to show teachers how to combine Big Read resources for *Their Eyes Were Watching God* with online arts resources. Theatrical events like Will & Co.'s stage presentation of *The Grapes of Wrath* made the book accessible to teens who took the stage. The arts collaborations initiated by Wisconsin's Peninsula Players let participants "explore a book or a period of history in a multi-source, multi-arts way."

Libraries in Rural Areas

Libraries or consortia that serve rural, often widespread, areas see The Big Read as a way to pool and leverage resources to expand awareness and access to them. The Director of the Libraries of Eastern Oregon said: "I'd like to think that our region is reflective of other extremely remote areas where The Big Read should be going on: rural Alaska, western Wyoming, the corner of Nebraska." All the librarians in the consortium interviewed for the case study addressed the

"transformation" that The Big Read brought about. Jo Colowing, Chair of the LEO Board explained, "Doing The Big Read together this year has done wonders because we all offered so many programs associated with the themes of *The Joy Luck Club* that people in our communities are clamoring for more and more. They saw quality of programs and want more. We didn't have that reputation for quality programming because we didn't know how to do it or have the time, but since getting The Big Read we've been cooperating, helping one another…and the public is responding. It's really helping us." The coordinator in Ironwood, Michigan described an equally important need and successful program.

We had done programming before but not on that scale and not with that many partners. It has given us a great deal of confidence to do more." For the first time, Ironwood is participating in the Great Michigan Read. Now, says Big Read coordinator Erickson, communities are "used to the library taking a more proactive stance" and are "looking toward the library as a place to experience programming." In that way, "The Big Read has changed our community's view of the library." Across communities that have rarely collaborated, Erickson said, "It's the library that is stepping up and bringing people together," and noted the power of good literature to start the dialogue: "It makes perfect sense: why shouldn't people rally around literature? That's what literature does—it helps to have a common dialogue, have compassion. In some ways it makes perfect sense, but it was also a surprise."

The Big Read also spurred them to think more creatively about programming. The diversity of programs and events included in The Big Read has "carried over to our other efforts." Now, "When we do something, we think more creatively about it." The library has also realized the role it's able to play in the broader planning of arts programming. This has also affected their thinking about partnerships. Before The Big Read, Erickson said they felt they had little to offer partners; however, "The Big Read materials and theme gave us the common theme to approach them." Now, she said, "We stop and say who can we involve in this? That is a direct result of The Big Read."

At the broadest level, The Big Read succeeded in communicating the national importance of reading for these communities. While the impact of The Big Read may be "subtle and not easy to measure," Erickson is assured "it's out there." She pointed to the several hundred community members who participated in some aspect of The Big Read and the conversations it inspired—"wonderful conversations about art, politics, and music and how the arts are all related."

"This community is such a perfect place for a Big Read," said Erickson. She again emphasized the independence and inclination of the towns to be self-sufficient and not typically talk to one another. Now, it's crucial that they learn how to collaborate, consolidate their interests, and communicate. "For the first time, the three communities are doing something together. It worked; people did come together in a common conversation. We're hoping that is the start of a bigger conversation." Nationally, Erickson said that The Big Read also comes at a critical point, offering the opportunity, during a controversial war, to "step back and realize how important reading is in our communities and raising good moral human beings. The way people learn compassion is through books; that's how we have those conversations—through books. Nothing can help you walk in someone else's shoes like books." While it may not be stimulating the economy through providing jobs, Erickson said the significance of The Big Read should not be underestimated. "What it does is bring our nation up to a higher level. Without that, none of what we do is worth anything. If we are not intellectually and culturally strong, then we are not anything. We are big bullies with guns. That's not the nation I want to be part of. I want to be part of a nation that reads."

Part Four

THE IMPACT OF THE BIG READ
on Participants and Literary Reading

Overview

The Big Read was created to bring community members together, around a single book, to celebrate reading. Based on that measure and feedback from grantees in surveys, interviews, and final report narratives, the program can be called an unqualified success. The program was also designed to get people reading, especially those whose reading habits had lapsed or whose leisure-time activities did not typically include reading literature—those who, according to *Reading at Risk*, were part of a disturbing downward trend in literary reading. Based on that measure, success has to be qualified, not necessarily because The Big Read has not made inroads with these groups, but because we lack sufficient data. As noted in preceding sections, our respondent samples for all instruments skew toward a population that is older, better educated, and more likely to read for pleasure than the general population. Aggregated findings, therefore, are a more accurate reflection of this group's Big Read experiences than those of lapsed, reluctant, or younger readers.

To address the imbalance, in the following sections we have disaggregated data to show how responses vary by age, gender, level of schooling, and reading habits. In some cases, numbers are small, so the findings lack the statistical power of overall findings, but it is still possible to report some trends that may point to potential if not actual impact. (Part Five of this report also provides data on teens and young adults.) Results based on participant data suggest that The Big Read has had a marked impact on the older, more avid readers who make up the majority of the respondent group. Though they may not have been the group who prompted concerns about reading, analyses of their responses still shed light on the program's impact and value.

Sample and Methodology

The instruments that participants completed during the program invited them to indicate their willingness to participate in a follow-up study by providing a phone number or email address. Regardless of age, most provided the latter, reflecting the fact that our respondent group represented a population with Internet access and skills. The evaluation team therefore invited respondents, via email, to log on to a survey two-to-three months after month-long Big Reads. Respondents could also call a toll-free number and complete the survey by phone. Table 48 shows the number of responses by cycle and instrument and the percentage of sites represented; Tables 49 and 50 show the range in returns by instrument and cycle.

Table 48. Participant Responses by Cycle and Instrument

	Post Cards	Sites Represented	Event Cards	Sites Represented	Participant Survey*	Sites Represented	Participant Follow-up survey	Sites Represented
P1C1	998	59 (81.9%)	3.570	35 (48.6%)	732 (20.1%)	62 (86.1%)	283 (37.8%)	50 (69.4%)
P1C2	2,338	111 (94.9%)	6.954	86 (73.5%)	961(26.4%)	103 (88.0%)	333 (44.5%)	78 (66.7%)
P2C1	NA	NA	NA	NA	1,883 (51.8%)	99 (78.6%)	133 (17.8%)	33 (26.2%)
TOTAL	3,336	170 (89.9%)	10,524	121 (64.0%)	3,636	264 (83.8%)	755	161** (51%)

*60 surveys missing site codes.

**6 respondents did not identify sites.

Table 49. Range in Participant Responses per Site

Cycle	Post Cards	Event Cards	Participant Survey	Participant Follow-up survey
P1C1	1-80	1-419	1-78	1-32
P1C2	1-92	1-553	1-70	1-29
P2C1	NA	NA	1-137	1-14

Table 50. Participant Survey—Range per Site, per Cycle

Cycle	0 Responses	1-9 Responses	10-19 Responses	20-49 Responses	50-100 Responses	100+ Responses
P1C1 (N=72)	12	36	12	10	2	0
P1C2 (N=117)	13	85	12	6	1	0
P2C1 (N=126)	27	56	15	13	13	2

Tables 51-53 show the demographics of the follow-up survey responses. Consistent with data reported in earlier reports, the majority of responses were submitted by educated white females. (The P2C1 surveys showed more diversity, but the summer 2008 receipt of those surveys, close to the expiration date of OMB approval, limited the number of participants who could be invited to complete a follow-up survey, a fact reflected in the relatively small number of responses from that cycle.) All data were self-reported.

Table 51. Participant Follow-Up Survey Responses by Age (N=551)

Age	Percent	U.S. percent, 2002 Census
Under 18	4.0%	NA
18-24	2.7%	13.0%
25-34	5.6%	18.0%
35-44	13.6%	22.0%
45-54	24.7%	19.0%
55-64	24.1%	13.0%
65-74	16.2%	8.0%
75 and older	6.0%	8.0%

Table 52. Participant Follow-Up Survey Responses by Level of Schooling (N=549)

Schooling	Percent	U.S. Percent, 2002 Census
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	4.2%	10.0%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	4.0%	31.0%
Some college, no degree	15.3%	28.0%
Bachelors degree	30.6%	17.0%
Graduate or professional degree	45.9%	9.0%

Table 53. Ethnicity of Participant Follow-Up Survey Respondents (N=472)

Race/Ethnicity	Percent
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.4%
Asian	0.6%
Black or African American	7.8%
Hispanic	0.6%
White	85.8%
Other	2.1%

Key Findings, Part Four

- Overall, participants completing surveys were very positive in their responses to The Big Read.
  - Approximately three-fourths thought reading The Big Read book was a very worthwhile thing to do, that the book was a good choice for their community, and that they would like to take part in another Big Read.
  - Two thirds agreed that participating in The Big read made them more comfortable attending literary or arts events; almost all event card respondents said that the event they attended made them want to go to more events about books and reading.

- The Big Read generated an interest in the themes, issues, and historical periods portrayed in the novels, an outcome confirmed by grantees in surveys and interviews.
  - Almost three-fourths of the participant survey respondents said the novel deepened their understanding of the topics, themes, and periods.
  - Over 90% of the event card respondents said the event made them want to learn more about the theme, period, and author.

- Survey respondents indicated that they had participated at fairly high levels in Big Read activities—women slightly more so than men, older readers more so than younger ones, and avid readers more so than less avid readers. For most activities, sizeable numbers of participants were participating in literary reading activities for the first time.
  - Almost two-thirds of the participants (62.0%) reported attending a literary event at a public library; a third (32.4%) did so for the first time. Over half (58.7%) attended a literature-related event at a museum, university, or other institution; for just over a third (36.6%), it was a first-time experience.
  - Just under half (46.3%) attended joined a book club or attended a meeting for The Big Read; a third (33.0%) joined for the first time.
  - Close to two-thirds (64.4%) checked out a book or tape from the public library. For fewer participants (7.8%), this was the first time.
  - One-fourth (24.7%) got a library card; for one in five participants (20.1%), this was their first library card.

- For all activities discussed above, levels of participation were in some cases lower for Phase 2, Cycle 1 participants than for the other two cycles, which may reflect larger numbers of teen and young adult participants, who in response to other items indicated that they were less avid readers. First-time participation figures were highest for Cycle 2.

- Although the sample and responses indicate that The Big Read participants were older and more avid readers, some data also suggest that less than avid readers, and in some cases younger audiences or audiences whose reading rates research says are declining, were also attracted to these activities.
  - One-fourth of those who attended a library event did so for the first time.
  - Children and young adults (ages 18-24) were most likely to be those getting a library card. For almost one in five (17.5%), it was their first library card.
  - Young adults (people ages 18-24) were more likely than children or adults age 25 and older to be participating in activities for the first time.
  - Although many respondents were avid readers, data indicate some changes in their reading habits after, and, by their reports, as a result of The Big Read.
  - Except for getting a library card, which they did at similar or slightly higher rates compared to other participants, those who indicated that they spent less than fifteen minutes a day reading for pleasure (n=431) were less likely to participate in The Big Read activities. Those at the other end of the scale—those who reported reading over an hour a day—were more likely than less avid readers to have joined a book club and attended a literature event.

- Those indicating that they read for pleasure less than fifteen minutes a day were—by margins from three to one to seven to one—more likely to be getting a library card and checking out a book for the first time.

- According to follow-up survey responses, two to three months after their Big Read, one in five participants said they read more books than they typically read before The Big Read; 29% said their selection of books was affected by participation. Many noted that *what* they read had changed—they had read more classics, other books in the same genre as The Big Read book, or books about the author or time period.
  - Three-fourths of the respondents said they had checked a book out of the library or purchased a book since The Big Read; around 40% had used the Internet to learn about topics related to literature, attended another event at the library, or another reading-related event. One-third said they had done these things because of their participation in The Big Read.
  - Respondents said they enjoyed reading a book they would not have selected on their own or if they had not been part of a larger community read and an even larger national initiative to rally interest in reading great literature. Participants described events, discussions, and conversations that would never have occurred had it not been for The Big Read. Several noted how The Big Read had inspired them to pick up a book again, renewed their interest in reading, and convinced them of the value of making time to read every day.

SECTION 12:
IMPACT ON READERS, READING, AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE ARTS

Did participation increase interest in the themes and periods portrayed in The Big Read books and the likelihood that participants would seek out other titles and events?

Findings in this section come primarily from self-reported participant survey data; however, responses to similar items from self-reported event cards and postcards are included, as well.

Thoughts on The Big Read

For just under two-thirds (61.0%) of the participant survey respondents, The Big Read book was a new read, and most (85.8%) reported that they had finished the book. In response to a series of items designed to gauge their general responses to the book and events, participants were very positive, overall. (A subset of similar items on the event and postcards also elicited positive responses, included in the discussion below.) The nine participant survey items were:

1. Reading The Big Read book was a very worthwhile thing to do.
2. I talk more about books with friends or family than I did before The Big Read.
3. The Big Read events deepened my understanding of the novel.
4. Participating in The Big Read made me want to read more often for pleasure.
5. Reading this book increased my understanding of topic, themes, or historical period of the book.
6. This book was a good choice for my community.
7. I'd like to read another book by the same author or that takes place in the same period.
8. Participating in The Big Read made me more comfortable attending literary or arts events.
9. I'd like to take part in another Big Read.

- Three-fourths (74.7%) of the participant survey respondents agreed that reading The Big Read book was a very worthwhile thing to do; just under half (47.0%), strongly agreed. Similarly high percentages (71.8%) said the book was a good choice for their community.

- Over half (56.5%) agreed that they talked more about books with friends and family than they did before The Big Read.

- Two-thirds (62.7%) agreed that participating in The Big Read made them more comfortable attending literary or arts events. Almost all (93.5%) of the event card respondents agreed that the event made them want to go to more events about books and reading; over half (54.3%) strongly agreed.

- Three-fourths of the survey respondents said they'd like to take part in another Big Read.Somewhat fewer, but still over half (57.4%) agreed that they'd like to read another book by the same author or one that takes place in the same period. Levels of agreement about a companion item were 10 percentage points lower for the event card respondents—48.1% said they would like to read more books like The Big Read book—and 10 percentage points higher for the postcard respondents, 68.3% of whom agreed.

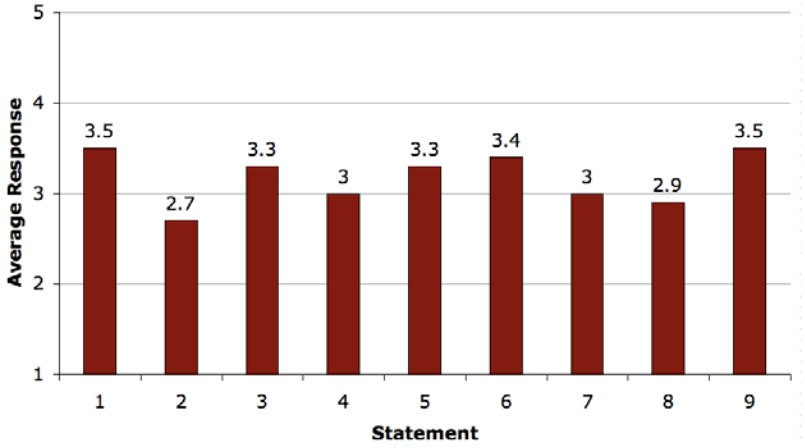
An item related to the topics, themes, and historical periods portrayed in The Big Read book drew positive responses on the participant survey and event cards. Three-fourths of the survey respondents agreed that The Big Read event(s) deepened their understanding of the novel (72.0%) and their understanding of topics, themes, or the historical period of the book (72.5%). Almost all (92.6%) of the event card respondents agreed that the event made them want to learn more about the period, theme, or author; almost half (49.3%) of all event card respondents strongly agreed. Almost all (97.8%) of the grantee survey respondents agreed that The Big Read generated an interest in the themes and issues portrayed in The Big Read book; 91.8% agreed that it generated an interest in historical periods—and local connections to them. Grantees often praised the contributions of museum partners and exhibits that gave citizens a sense of historical context and other ways to connect to the novels.

*"Everybody loved [*The Joy Luck Club*]" and the conflict between the different generations, different ethnicities," said The Big Read coordinator for the Libraries of Eastern Oregon. "People are talking about the Kam Wah Chung museum, and the book prompted them to go visit. It prompted others to take a raft trip down the river to see a site where Chinese laborers were massacred. People brought in Chinese artifacts to display—one from an archaeological dig. People are going places they hadn't been before, doing research. Oregon State Parks, which offered free admission to the museum for The Big Read, said that attendance …has gone way up as a result of this project." As far as making an impact on reading, the coordinator said, "Amy Tan's other books going off the shelves like hotcakes." (Libraries of Eastern Oregon)*

Other events emphasized the theme of California Journeys. From the kickoff through the closing event, Big Read organizers encouraged participants to share how and why they came to live in Monterey. In the final report, grantees observed, "Over and over again, we realized that the Dustbowl Era, the Depression, and the westward migration were not history among many members of the community; they are events that continue to affect lives in the same way serving in a war affects a soldier's life forever and never really becomes the past." (The National Steinbeck Center, CA)

Figure 12 shows the average response to or mean for each participant survey item on a 4-point scale where 1=strongly disagree and 4=strongly agree.

Figure 12. Averages of Participants' Responses about Their Big Read Experience



Source: Participant Survey (N=3636). Statements are located on page 97.

Disaggregation by Demographics

Because the data skew toward an older, female, and better-educated populace, we disaggregated data to look at differences in responses to the nine survey items by demographic category. We also conducted correlation analyses to examine associations. Although there is some variation, one trend remained constant regardless of breakdown: the statements with the highest and lowest means were the same by gender, schooling, age, and grade level.

Differences by Gender

Female survey respondents reported a slightly more positive view of their Big Read experience than did males, across all nine items. The average rating for females was 2.3, as compared with the males's average of 2.0.

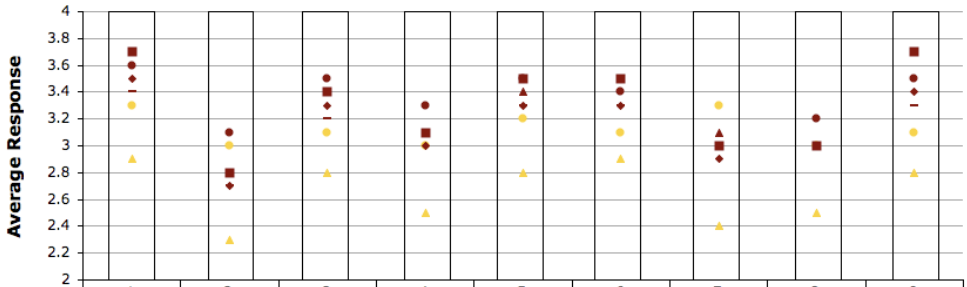
Differences by Cycle, Level of Schooling, and Age

Comparisons of means by cycle showed that participants in P2C1, which included more teens and young adults, answered all questions with a slightly less positive response than did respondents from the other two cycles. Breakdowns by levels of schooling and age showed more pronounced differences. Overall, participants with higher levels of education were the most positive about their Big Read experiences, although responses among all levels were very similar with the exception of those in the "9th to 12th grade, no diploma" category. (See Figure 13.)

Among current students, those in elementary school reported the most positive and consistently high responses to the questions; adults with college degrees (including graduate, professional, and post-graduate degrees) were also very positive about their experiences. High school students

reported the lowest level of agreement with the questions. (Approximately 13% of the respondents to the participant survey were current high school students.)

Figure 13. Means by Level of Schooling

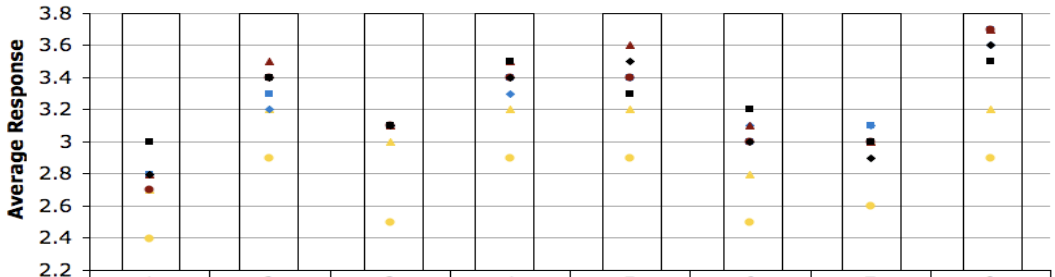


	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Less than 9th grade	3.3	3	3.1	3	3.2	3.1	3.3	3	3.1
9th-12th, no degree	2.9	2.3	2.8	2.5	2.8	2.9	2.4	2.5	2.8
High school graduate	3.4	2.7	3.2	3.1	3.3	3.3	3	3	3.3
Some college, no degree	3.5	2.7	3.3	3	3.3	3.3	2.9	3	3.4
Associates degree	3.6	3.1	3.5	3.3	3.5	3.4	0.0	3.2	3.5
Bachelor's degree	3.7	2.8	3.4	3.1	3.4	3.5	3.1	3	3.7
Graduate or professional degree	3.7	2.8	3.4	3.1	3.5	3.5	3	3	3.7

Source: Participant Survey (N=3334), Statements are located on page 97

As a group, participants under 18 (which could include elementary, middle, and high school students) were slightly less positive in their responses to the questions, while there was little difference in response between participants aged 25 and older. (See Figure 14.)

Figure 14. Means by Age



	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Under 18	2.4	2.9	2.5	2.9	2.9	2.5	2.6	2.9
18-24	2.7	3.2	3	3.2	3.2	2.8	3	3.2
25-34	2.8	3.2	3.1	3.3	3.4	3.1	3.1	3.6
35-44	2.8	3.3	3.1	3.4	3.4	3	3.1	3.7
45-54	2.7	3.4	3.1	3.4	3.4	3	3	3.7
55-64	2.8	3.5	3.1	3.5	3.6	3.1	3	3.7
65-74	2.8	3.4	3.1	3.4	3.5	3	2.9	3.6
75 and older	3	3.4	3.1	3.5	3.3	3.2	3	3.5

Source: Participant Survey (N=3474), Statements are located on page 97

The Association between Reading Habits and Responses to Statements about The Big Read

Because we could hypothesize a relationship, we also ran correlations to test the association between the time participants reported reading for pleasure and their level of agreement with the nine statements, and we found the correlations to be small to none. Although still small, the greatest correlation was between time spent reading and the statement about another Big Read: those who spend more time reading were more likely to say they would take part again.

SECTION 13:
READING AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE ARTS *DURING* THE BIG READ

What reading activities do participants engage in during The Big Read and to what extent are these new activities or behaviors?

The Big Read offered a wide range of activities to promote reading and public participation in the arts, and much of the self-reported data suggest that they drew community members to libraries, museums, and other institutions. Survey responses from those who participated in activities for the first time suggest that less-than-avid readers—those who wouldn't typically pick up a piece of great fiction to read for pleasure—were also attracted to these institutions and activities.

- Overall, almost two-thirds (62.0%) of the participants reported that they attended a literary event at a local public library; one-third of those (32.4%) said that was their first time.
- Over half (58.7%) said they attended a literature-related event at a museum, university, or other institution; over one-third (33.6%) said they had never done that before.
- Just under half (46.3%) joined a book club or attended a meeting for The Big Read; one-third (33.0%) said it was the first time they had done so.
- Close to two-thirds (64.4%) checked out a book or tape from the public library; most had done so before—7.8% did so for the first time.
- One-fourth (24.7%) got a library card during The Big Read; for one in five (20.1%), it was their first library card.

The percentage of participants who said they engaged in activities during The Big Read varied from cycle to cycle: P2C1 participants took part in activities at lower rates than those in preceding cycles, possibly reflecting larger numbers of younger participants. P1C2 participants reported significantly higher percentages of "first time" engagement in all activities; comments from some grantees describe concerted efforts to sign up teens and young adults in non-traditional settings for library cards.

Table 54. Participation by Cycle and Overall (N=3636)

Activity	Percent Yes				Percent First Time			
	P1C1	P1C2	P2C1	Overall	P1C1	P1C2	P2C1	Overall
Got a library card	16.6	27.3	26.8	24.7	10.1	50.9	12.6	20.1
Checked out a book or tape from the local library	70.4	71.5	60.7	64.4	3.5	26.1	4.2	7.8
Attended a literary event at the local library	66.7	69.8	58.6	62.0	26.5	44.8	31.0	32.4
Joined a book club/attended a meeting	50.3	57.0	42.4	46.3	26.9	50.2	20.8	33.0
Attended a literature-related event at a museum, university, or other institution	61.4	64.7	56.4	58.7	29.1	45.4	36.9	36.6

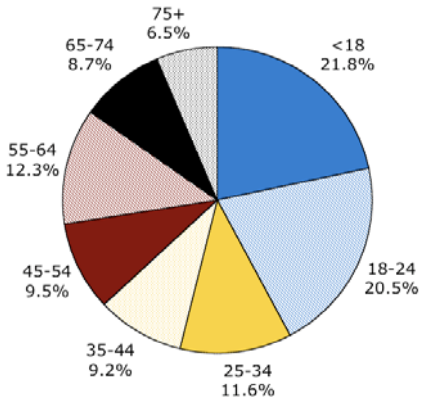
Source: Participant Survey

Again, to look at differences, we disaggregated data by age, gender, and level of schooling.

Participation by Age

Children and young adults (ages 18-24) were the most likely to report getting library cards during the program. These two populations make up only 25% of the respondent pool but 43% of the respondents reporting that they got a library card during The Big Read (see Figure 15). Though it is important to note that children were getting library cards, it is not surprising that younger participants, as opposed to older ones, were getting cards. What may be more significant is the percentage of young adults, ages 18-24, who got library cards. We have anecdotal evidence from one site that university librarians urged students to get public library cards and to get acquainted with both the public and university libraries during their time on campus. Comments from some P1C2 sites also describe efforts to use Big Read events to sign teens and young adults up for library cards.

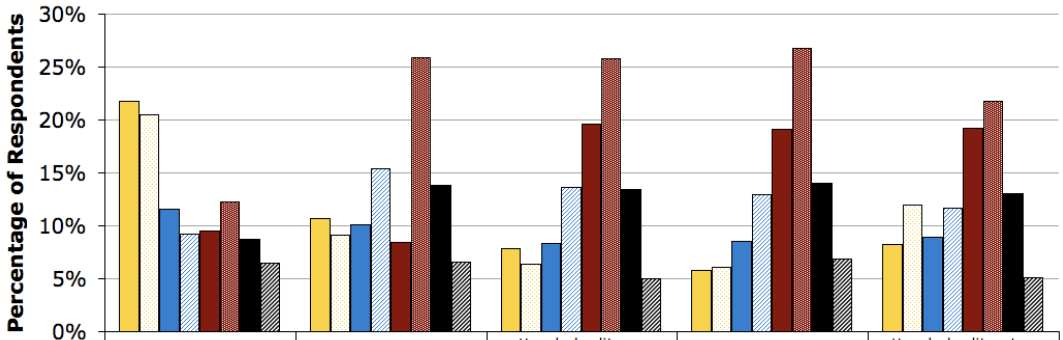
Figure 15. Percentage, by Age, of Library Card Recipients



Source: Participant Survey (N=3474)

Adults ages 45-64 were the largest segment of The Big Read population reporting participation in literary events and book clubs (making up 45.4% of those reporting attending a literary event at a library, 45.9% of those reporting joining a book club/attending a meeting, and 41.0% of those reporting attending a literature-related event at a museum, university, or other institution). (See Figure 16.) Their participation levels, in contrast to those of younger audiences, paralleled their portion of the participant pool.

Figure 16. Overall Participation by Age

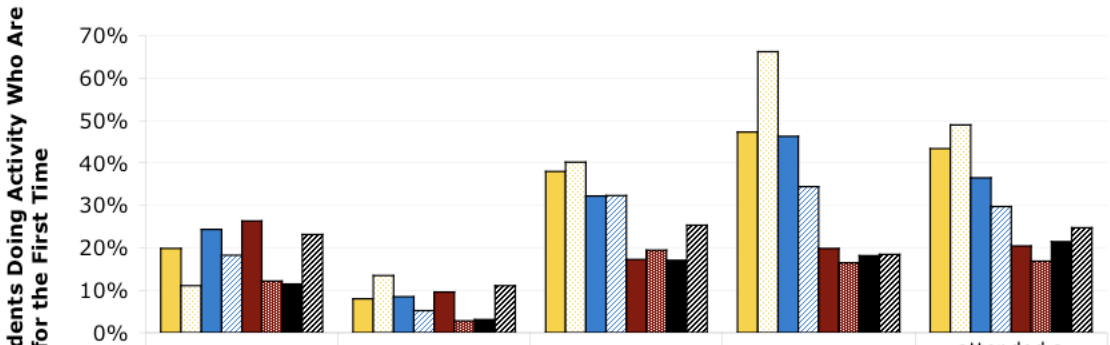


	got library card	checked out a book	attended a literary event	joined a book club	attended a literature related event
<18	21.8%	10.7%	7.8%	5.8%	8.2%
18-24	20.5%	9.1%	6.4%	6.1%	12.0%
25-34	11.6%	10.1%	8.3%	8.5%	8.9%
35-44	9.2%	15.4%	13.6%	12.9%	11.7%
45-54	9.5%	8.4%	19.6%	19.1%	19.2%
55-64	12.3%	25.9%	25.8%	26.8%	21.8%
65-74	8.7%	13.8%	13.4%	14.0%	13.0%
75+	6.5%	6.6%	5.0%	6.9%	5.1%

Source: Participant Survey (N=3,474)

Percentages of first-time participation were highest among young adults (ages 18-24), followed by those under 18. The activities teens and young adults were most likely to be participating in for the first time were book clubs and museum or university events. That in their relatively short lives younger people had attended fewer library or museum events than those twice as old is predictable, but still notable, and may reflect concerted efforts to engage teens and young adults less likely to frequent libraries and museums or new to communities. (See Figure 17.)

Figure 17. Percentages of First-Time Participation, by Age



	got library card	checked out a book	attended a literary event	joined a book club	attended a literature related event
<18	19.8%	8.0%	38.0%	47.3%	43.4%
18-24	11.1%	13.5%	40.2%	66.2%	49.0%
25-34	24.3%	8.5%	32.2%	46.3%	36.5%
35-44	18.2%	5.2%	32.3%	34.4%	29.7%
45-54	26.3%	9.6%	17.3%	19.8%	20.4%
55-64	12.2%	2.8%	19.4%	16.5%	16.9%
65-74	11.5%	3.1%	17.1%	18.1%	21.4%
75+	23.1%	11.1%	25.3%	18.4%	24.7%

Source: Participant Survey (N=3,474)

Participation by Gender

An examination of participation by gender reflected the preponderance of women in the survey sample, with more women than men reporting participation in all the activities listed in the survey by margins of three to one or higher. For example, of all those getting a library card, 74.7% were female, and 25.3%, male; of all those checking out a book, 81.8% were female, and 18.2%, male. The greatest difference was in those joining book clubs: 86.0% were female, and 14.0%, male.

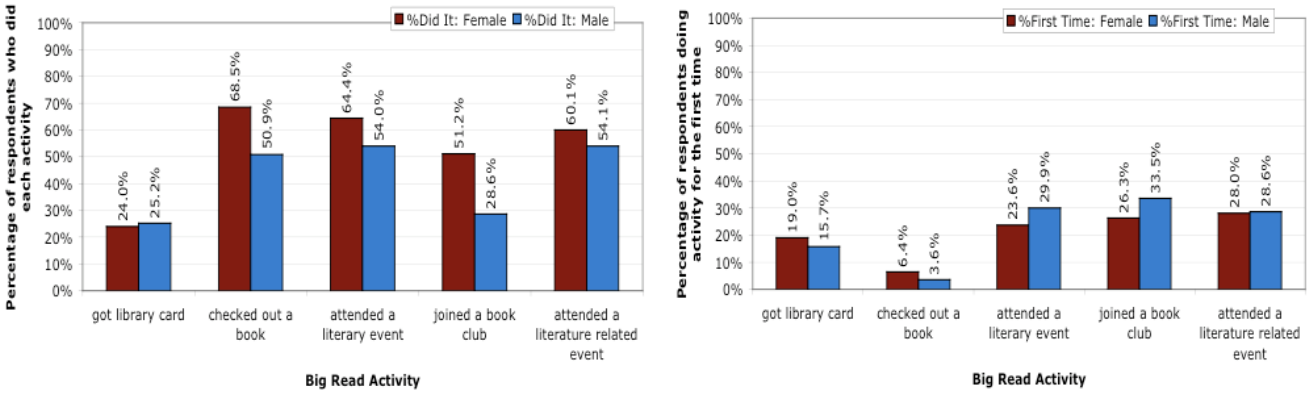
A closer look at the data showed that, proportionately, men and women participated in activities at similar rates: 25.2% of all male participants got a library card, compared to 24.0% of all female participants; one-half to two-thirds of both groups attended library or museum events. A notable exception was that women were more likely than men to join a book club or attend a meeting; over half of participating women (51.2%) did so, as compared with about one-quarter of men (28.6%). Proportionately, percentages of those engaging in activities for the first time did not vary by gender: 19.0% of the female participants and 15.7% of the male participants, for example, got library cards. Interestingly, proportionate to their overall numbers, percentages of men and women joining a book club or attending an event for the first time did not vary greatly. (See Table 55 and Figure 18.)

Table 55. Proportionate Participation Rates by Gender (N=3,406)

	Got library card		Checked out book/ tape		Attended literary event		Joined book club		Attended museum event	
	% Yes, of all female/male participants	% of those engaging in activity who were doing so for first time	% Yes	% first time	% Yes	% first time	% Yes	% first time	% Yes	% first time
Women	24.0	19.0	68.5	6.4	64.4	23.6	51.2	26.3	60.1	28.0
Men	25.2	15.7	50.9	3.6	54.0	29.9	28.6	33.5	54.1	28.6

Source: Participant Survey

Figure 18. Proportionate Participation, and Percentage of First-time Participation, by Gender



Source: Participant Survey (N=3406)

Activities by Level of Schooling

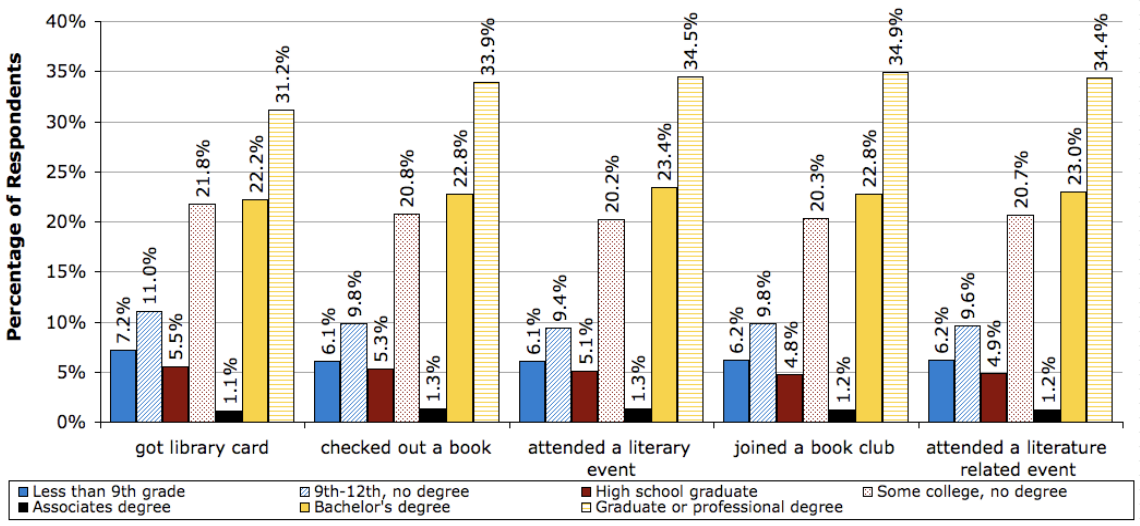
Over half of all participants reporting involvement in each of the activities had a bachelor's degree or graduate/professional degree (53.4%-57.9%, depending on the activity), again reflecting the composition of the participant sample. Less education generally indicates that participants are still in school—29.9% of the respondent pool indicated that they were in middle school, high school, or college. Again, younger audiences were more likely to have participated in activities for the first time. Results worth noting include the fact that almost half (47.9%) of the students younger than 9th grade joined a book club and that high school students indicated the lowest levels of participation.

Table 56. Participation by Level of Schooling (N=3,334)

	Got library card		Checked out book/tape		Attended literary event		Joined book club		Attended museum/ university event	
	% Yes	1st time	% Yes	1st time	% Yes	1st time	% Yes	1st time	% Yes	1st time
<9th (n=200)	60.1	62.6	65.5	50.0	57.1	72.3	47.9	80.2	53.5	76.1
9-12 (n=297)	23.3	7.9	35.7	4.0	30.1	34.1	14.5	46.2	30.6	40.2
HS grad (n=178)	37.8	5.9	64.2	5.2	49.0	26.0	38.3	41.2	42.8	45.8
Some College (n=705)	29.4	15.2	58.1	6.1	51.5	26.2	36.9	30.6	53.7	37.0
Assoc. Deg. (n=46)	40.7	9.1	77.8	3.6	76.3	20.7	56.3	33.3	51.5	23.5
Bach. Deg. (n=787)	16.6	3.3	70.0	2.4	69.7	22.9	52.0	23.1	65.4	23.0
Grad./Prof. Deg(n=1,167)	14.5	6.3	73.3	1.3	75.0	16.6	61.0	16.6	69.1	16.4

Source: Participant Survey

Figure 19. Participation by Level of Schooling



Source: Participant Survey (N=3,334)

Participation by Time Spent Reading

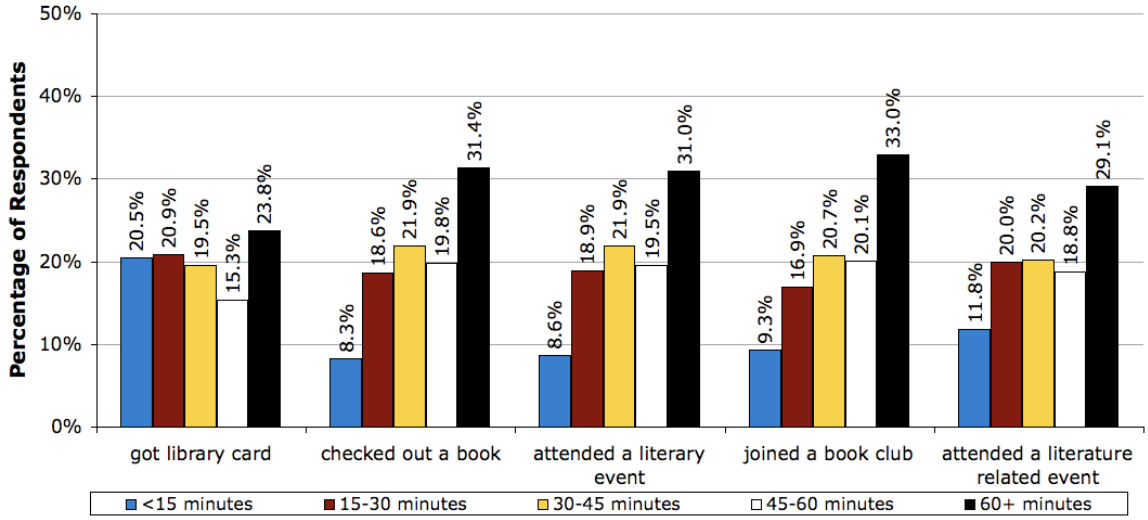
On the participant survey, respondents indicated how much time they spend reading for pleasure every day. We used these responses to calibrate reading habits and then looked at participation by each level (from <15 minutes a day to 60 or more minutes a day). Except for getting a library card, which they did at similar or slightly higher rates compared to other participants, those who indicated that they spent less than fifteen minutes a day reading for pleasure (n=431) were less likely to participate in Big Read activities. Those at the other end of the scale—those who reported reading over an hour a day—were more likely than less avid readers to have checked out a book, joined a book club and attended a literary or museum event. In the reading time mid-ranges, percentages fluctuated. (See Table 57 and Figure 20).

Table 57. Participation by Reading Time (N=3458)

	Got library card		Checked out book/ tape		Attended literary event		Joined book club		Attended museum/univ. event	
	% Yes	%1st time	% Yes	%1st time	% Yes	%1st time	% Yes	%1st time	% Yes	%1st time
<15 (n=431)	20.5	56.8	8.3	58.6	8.6	22.2	9.3	25.6	11.8	24.8
15-30 (n=734)	20.9	18.9	18.6	11.7	18.9	23.6	16.9	21.6	20.0	26.7
30-45 (n=742	19.5	11.7	21.9	12.6	21.9	20.4	20.7	19.3	20.2	17.2
45-60 (n=610)	15.3	4.5	19.8	4.5	19.5	12.0	20.1	10.9	18.8	10.9
60+ (n=941)	23.8	8.1	31.4	12.6	31.0	21.8	33.0	22.7	29.1	20.4

Source: Participant Survey

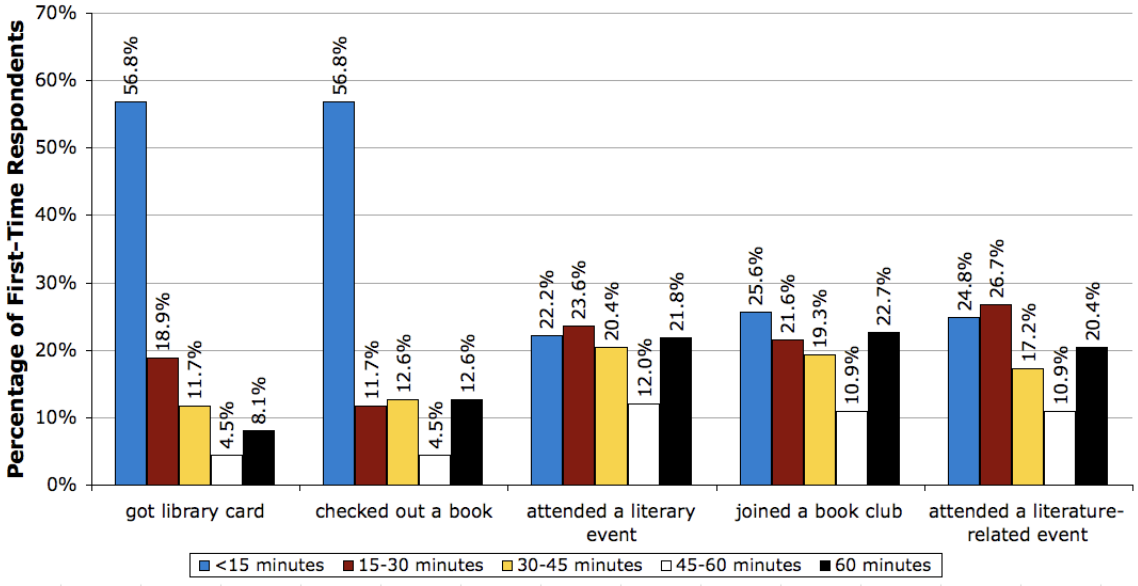
Figure 20. Participation by Reading Habits



Source: Participant Survey (N=3334)

Other interesting differences based on reading habits emerged in a comparison of the numbers of those participating in activities for the first time. Those indicating that they read for pleasure less than fifteen minutes a day were—by margins from three to one to seven to one—more likely to be getting a library card and checking out a book for the first time. These spikes were due in large part to the activities of P1C2 respondents, who reported far higher first-time participation than those from the other two cycles. Interestingly, the lowest percentages for first-time participation were for those who read 45-60 minutes a day. Otherwise, patterns were similar.

Figure 21. First-Time Participation, by Reading Habits



Source: Participant Survey

SECTION 14: PARTICIPATION IN READING ACTIVITIES *AFTER* THE BIG READ

Does evidence suggest a lasting impact on readers and public participation in the arts?

Two to three months after their local Big Reads, participants completed a follow-up survey containing items about the program and reading-related activities they had undertaken since The Big Read. Overall, 755 participants from three cycles completed the survey; six were missing information and not included in the analysis, leaving a total of 749.

Table 58. Participant Follow-Up Survey Responses

Big Read Cycle	Number	Percent
P1C1	283	37.8%
P1C2	333	44.5%
P2C1	133	17.8%
TOTAL	749	100.1

Consistent with other data, the majority of responses were submitted by educated white females: 86% were white, 79% were female, 77% held a Bachelor's degree or higher, and 46% of those had a graduate or professional degree. Less than half (46%) were 55 or older, 8% were African-American, 21% were male, 4% were high school students, and almost a quarter had not completed college.

Reading Activities—and Changes in Reading Habits—after The Big Read

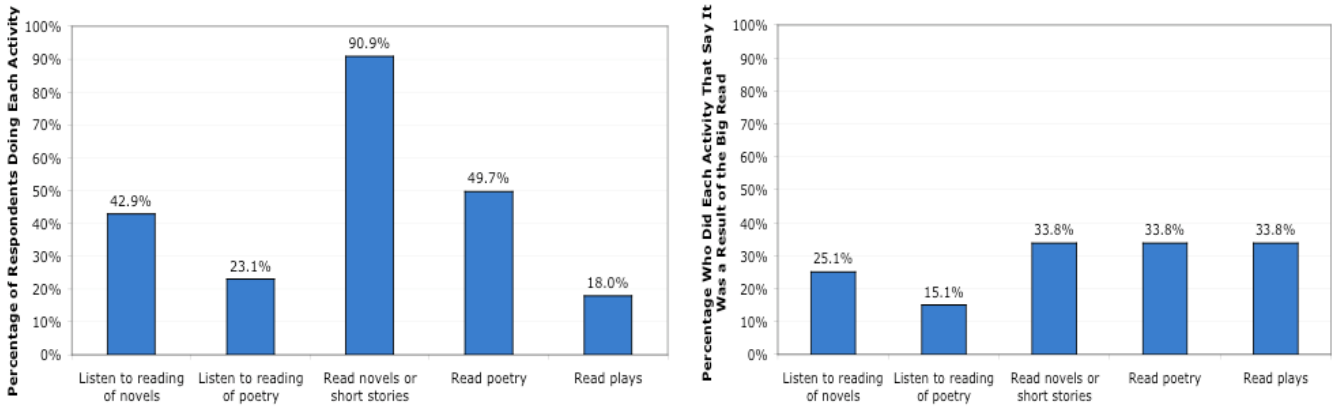
Feedback from those completing the follow-up survey indicated that the program affected reading habits, even among avid readers. Sizeable percentages reported increases in reading or literary activity after The Big Read, and even because of it.

- Since participating in The Big Read, 97% of respondents said they had read a book for pleasure.
- About one in five (21%) said that was an increase in the number of books they typically would have read before The Big Read.
- 29% said their selection of the book(s) they read was affected by their participation in The Big Read.

In their open-ended comments, respondents reported that they had read another book by the same author, a book about the time period (e.g., the Jazz age, the Depression era), recommendations they received at Big Read events, books by Big Read speakers, and biographies of Big Read authors. Some noted that they had developed or rediscovered an interest in a particular genre—"got back into the hardboiled detective genre"—and some said that they were reading or re-reading other classics, including other titles on The Big Read list.

Since The Big Read, 91% of respondents said they had read more novels or short stories; over a third said that was a result of The Big Read. Half said they read more poetry, and over 40% had listened to a reading of a novel or short story, either live or recorded. A quarter of those said they would not have done that had it not been for The Big Read. Nearly a quarter (23%) said they listened to a reading of poetry, either live or recorded; 15% attributed that to The Big Read (see Figure 22).

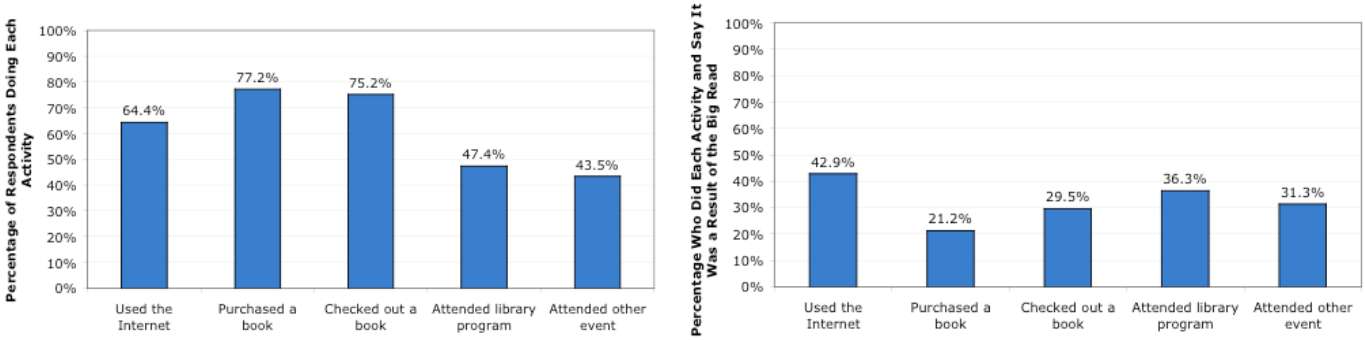
Figure 22. Participation in Reading Activities since The Big Read, and Participation Attributed to The Big Read



Source: Participant Follow-up Survey (N=749)

Three quarters of respondents said they had checked out a book from the public library or purchased a book since The Big Read. Thirty percent of book borrowers said they had done so because of The Big Read; 21% of book buyers said their purchase was a result of The Big Read. Nearly two thirds said they had used the Internet to learn about, read, or discuss topics related to literature (short stories, novels, poetry, or plays) since The Big Read, and 43% said that was a result of participating. Roughly one-third of participants said they had attended another event at the public library or another reading-related event as a direct result of The Big Read. (See Figure 23.)

Figure 23. Participation in Reading-Related Activities, and Participation Attributed to The Big Read



Source: Participant Follow-up Survey (N=749)

Most (92%) of those responding to the Participant Follow-Up Survey said they were avid readers before The Big Read and made a point of saying that they did not always attribute reading activities to the program because they would have done those things anyway. Even though 70% said they would rate their enjoyment of reading a 10 on a scale of 1-10, where 1=not at all and 10=very much, one-third still said their enjoyment of reading increased as a result of The Big Read. In addition:

- 34% said they spend more time reading as a result of participating in The Big Read. One participant said, " I think the Big Read was a great incentive to me to read more. It was my own personal 'wake up call.'"
- 41.1% said they had purchased more books.
- 39.6% reported they had checked out more books from the library.
- 29.4% said they had borrowed more books from friends or family.
- 16.0% reported they had changed where or how they acquire books. Some respondents said that they browse different sections at the library or in bookstores. One respondent noted being "more supportive of the local independent bookstore," and another said, "I do read about books in advertisements or that are recommended in the local paper due to the BIG read."

The small number of negative comments came from participants not interested in a particular book selection or genre. For example, although *Fahrenheit 451* appeared generally to be a very popular choice, some older readers said they did not care for science fiction. A few older readers also complained about the "small print," and a few younger ones found The Big Read classics "old" and "difficult."

Many respondents explained that participation had not changed how much they read but rather what they read: in addition to reading more classics or books by the same author or about the same time period, some were, through non-fiction, exploring topics related to The Big Read book. Participants also described conversations that would never have occurred had it not been for The Big Read, and many expressed their thanks. Several people noted that The Big Read had inspired them to pick up a book they hadn't read in some time, renewed their interest in reading, and convinced them of the value of making time to read every day.

Other avid readers said they enjoyed reading a book they would not have selected had they not been part of a larger community read and an even larger national initiative to rally interest in reading great literature. The value of a collective experience was apparent in many comments. For some participants, the benefit of a community-wide reading program was that it connected specific parts of the community, including different age groups and town and gown.

As a teacher I think it was outstanding to bring together students, parents, and educators for the simple reason of "talking" about books.

I felt that our intergenerational community discussion at our public high school was one of the best community activities I have attended. It brought together generations that don't often get together to discuss the types of issues brought forth by the book.

Others benefited from meeting people who shared an interest or from meeting people with different interests and points of view.

I loved the Big Read and can't wait to participate in more! Beyond offering literary opportunities it is a way for me to connect to the reading and writing community in Detroit—I very much want more of that.

I do choose books that I would not normally read as a result of The Big Read. It made me realize that I need to broaden my view of the world of reading by making reading choices based on the adventure of reading not my narrow perspective.

The thing I most liked about The Big Read was that it made reading a community event. I met people from all walks of life that had read the same book and I was able to hear their perspectives on the book and discuss the book with them. The whole process lowered barriers between people and encouraged sharing.

Part Five

THE HABIT OF READING

Teens, Young Adults, and The Big Read

Overview

Phase 1 findings indicated two things about teens' and young adults' participation in The Big Read. Compared to older readers, younger audiences were participating at lower rates, but those who did attend were responding favorably. Like older audiences, younger participants agreed that The Big Read book was a good choice for their communities, that the historical periods and issues portrayed were interesting, and that they would like to read more books in a similar vein. The key, or the challenge, appeared to be getting these younger audiences to events, or piquing their interest in imaginative literature. To explore how The Big Read might most successfully do that, the study team conducted a series of focus groups in Phase 2 designed to look specifically at participation and responses of teens and young adults. This part of the report shares our findings.

This Phase 2 study came on the heels of a second report from the NEA that contained more evidence of declines in the reading behaviors of America's youth and more cause for mounting efforts to reverse them. *To Read or Not To Read: A Question of National Consequenc*e, issued in November 2007, reported that young adults (aged 18 to 24) are reading fewer books in general; reading is a declining activity among teenagers (aged 13 to 17); teens and young adults (aged 15 to 34) spend less time reading than people of other age groups; even when reading does occur (for 7th-12th graders), it competes with other media. The NEA also found that reading for pleasure (among 12th graders) correlates strongly with academic achievement, but that college attendance no longer guarantees active reading habits.[23]

To Read or Not to Read echoed and expanded findings from *Reading at Risk*. The first report was based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2002 *Survey for the Public Participation in the Arts*, which did not include respondents under 18 years of age. *To Read or Not to Read* filled this gap with a meta-analysis of results from a wide range of national studies on reading that included teens as well as adults. The meta-analysis also allowed the NEA to examine the strength of relationships between variables (e.g., age and time spent reading) and explore critical links, such as those between reading habits and levels of education and employment. According to the report, not only are Americans spending less time reading, but reading comprehension skills are also eroding—and the declines could have serious civic, social, cultural, and economic implications.

[23] The National Endowment for the Arts, *To Read or Not to Read: A Question of National Consequence*, Research Report #47, 2007, Executive Summary, 7-11. Available at http://www.nea.gov/research/ToRead.pdf.

As it had when early findings from this study indicated low levels of participation by younger, less-than-avid readers, the NEA again encouraged grant applicants to explore ways to engage these audiences. Grantee organizations in turn prioritized partnerships with schools, colleges, and youth agencies, selected books or companion books with teen and young adult in mind, and planned programming and events to appeal to them.

The NEA also extended the evaluation of The Big Read through Phase 2 Cycle 1 (January-June 2008) to enable the study team to examine grantees' redoubled efforts and learn more from teens and young adults themselves about their participation in local programs. Like *Reading at Risk*, *To Read or Not to Read* inspired a national discussion about the reading habits of the nation's youth and the roles parents, peers, schools, libraries, literacy programs, and technology play in creating a culture of reading. The extended evaluation period provided an opportunity to explore these issues through the lens of The Big Read.

Methodology

The primary goal of the P2C1 study was to understand how school-age audiences were participating in The Big Read, what might explain relatively low participation rates, and what strategies might increase levels of participation. We gathered data through focus groups with teens and young adults, a brief reading checklist, and interviews with teachers, school administrators, and librarians. We looked specifically at:

- *in-class participation*, talking to students and teachers about activities related to the book, companion books, use of The Big Read materials, and practices most effective in engaging school-age audiences;
- *program appeal and out-of-class participation level*, asking students how they heard about The Big Read, whether they had taken part in local events, and which they enjoyed most;
- *response to the book*, asking students about the book itself, how it compared to what they typically read in school or for pleasure, whether it was a good choice for their communities, and what they learned about themselves or communities by reading it or attending events;
- *reading preferences and behaviors*, surveying teens and young adults—including those who participated in The Big Read and those who did not—and discussing what, why, and how much they read in their leisure time; and
- *impact on reading attitudes or behaviors*, asking students who had participated in The Big Read what they had done during or afterwards, and whether the program prompted or inspired these activities.

Site Selection and Recruitment

The study team, in collaboration with the NEA, selected sites in large part because of their outreach to teens and young adults. Selection criteria included evidence of school, community college, and university partnerships; partnerships with organizations that serve youth groups—e.g., Boys & Girls Clubs, YMCAs, Teen Advocacy Councils; and programming targeted specifically to youth and young adults, and reluctant or lapsed readers. We also considered prior experience, especially effective partnerships with schools.

From reviews of P2C1 proposals, we created a tentative list of 25 Big Read sites that best met the above criteria or gave us the widest range; we then narrowed the list to 13 sites, based on reviews of final reports from sites with prior experience, exploratory telephone interviews, and a need to balance sites by geographic location, population, book title, and programming schedule (April-May, 2008). We visited eight of the sites, and conducted post-program telephone interviews with the five remaining sites, eliminated from the site-visit group because of early programming dates, logistical challenges, or other priorities. (See Methodology Section, p. 151, for matrix of case study sites and description of how each site fit the selection criteria.)

The eight sites represented each of the four major census regions of the country and eight of the nine regional divisions. Three of the sites served large population areas; five, medium ones; and four, small areas. Six grantee/institution types, and a total of 388 teens and young adults, were included in the studies (see Table X).

Table 59. Representation of Case Study Sites

Census Bureau Regions	Divisions	Study Sites	Number of participants	Population Size*	Institution Type
Northeast	New England	UMass Memorial Health Care		S	Health Organization
	Middle Atlantic	Hartford, CT	25	L	Library
Midwest	East North Central	Muncie, IN Peninsula Players	92	M S	Library
	West North Central	Waukee, IA (telephone interview with students) Jamestown, ND	4	M S	Library
South	South Atlantic	Asheville, NC Cumberland Co, NC	44 58	L M	Arts Council/Collaborative Library
	East South Central	–			
	West South Central	Acadiana/Lafayette, LA	103	M	Performance Group
West	Mountain	Aspen, CO	36	M	Writing Center
	Pacific	Los Angeles, CA Salinas, CA Libraries of Eastern Oregon	19 7	L M L	Library Museum/Literary Center
TOTAL	8	13	388		9

*Small=<25,000; M=25,000-99,000; L=99,000+

Data Collection and Instruments

In April and May 2008, we spent two to three days in each of the eight sites. We attended Big Read events, visited classrooms, and held a total of 25 focus groups with 388 teens and young adults, who also completed a reading checklist. Focus groups included teens and young adults who were participating in The Big Read (n=323), voluntarily or as a class requirement. At the NEA's request, we added a third group—teens and young adults who were not participating in The Big Read (n=65). We drew this group from classrooms not reading the book and held ad hoc interviews at coffee shops, libraries, bookstores, and food courts. We also interviewed over 40 teachers, librarians, and administrators, and talked with grantees and partners.

Focus groups, for the most part organized prior to visits with grantees, teachers, and librarians, were guided by structured interview protocols designed in collaboration with the NEA. These were sensitive to respondents who had participated in The Big Read and those who had not. In addition to asking students about their Big Read participation, the checklist included demographic items and questions about reading habits. We tailored interview protocols for teachers, administrators, and librarians or media specialists; for program-level data collection, we used existing grantee/partner interview protocols and again consulted final reports and grantee surveys. All instruments appear in the Appendix A, p. 168.

Sample

Based on responses to demographic items, the study sample, like the larger study samples, skewed toward females, with roughly two-thirds female (63.3%) and one-third male (36.2%). Two-thirds of the participants (67.9%) were upper-middle to high-school aged, or 13-18. One-fourth were 19 to 25, and 6.8% were 22 or older. All were students, though some were enrolled part-time at community colleges. Over half (58.2%) were in high school, and close to a third (31.6%), college or university students; a small percentage (3.4%) of these were in community colleges. The sample also included middle school students (7.7% were in grades 6-8), and a few graduate and post-graduate students (3.3%). See Table 60.

Table 60. Focus Group Participants/Student Checklist Respondents

Gender (N=378)	Number	Percent
Male	137	63.2%
Female	239	36.2%
Age (N=383)	**Number**	**Percent**
13-15	64	16.7%
16-18	196	51.2%
19-21	76	19.8%
22-25	21	5.5%
26-29	8	2.1%
30-34	8	2.1%
35 or older	10	2.6%

Race and Ethnicity

The student group was somewhat more diverse than the overall Big Read participant sample, with fewer White participants (61.1% compared to 77.1%) and a third more African Americans (22.0% vs. 13.3%). Data on Hispanic audiences were again somewhat imprecise, again because of respondents' confusion about how to indicate their Hispanic or Latino ethnicity. In response to the race item, 54 or 13.9% of the respondents classified themselves as "Other." In response to the ethnicity item, 58 or 15.5% identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino. Using the figure, the representation of Hispanics in our student group is larger than in The Big Read sample (6.3%), and very similar to the U.S. population (14.8%), according to 2006 Census figures. (See Table 24, p 45.).

Table 61. Ethnicity of Student Checklist Respondents (n=374)

Race/Ethnicity	Number	Percent
American Indian or Alaska Native	5	1.3%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	1	0.3%
Asian	3	0.8%
Black or African American	83	22.2%
White	228	61.0%
Other	54	14.4%
TOTAL	374	100.0%
Hispanic	58	15.5%

Most (86%) students said they usually speak English at home; 10% reported Spanish as their home language, and 4% indicated they speak a language at home other than English or Spanish, including Korean and Vietnamese. Of those who speak a home language other than English, 89% said they speak English fluently. Just over a third of students (35%) said they read in a language other than English.

Key Findings, Part Five

- Teens and young adults are more likely to read The Big Read book if they are doing so as a class, as a requirement, or with some structure to stimulate involvement. Feedback from 323 high school (61%) and college (57%) students who had read or were reading The Big Read book were doing or had done so because it was required reading for a class. This was especially true for students in our focus groups between the ages of 26-34.

- Teens and young adults who had read or were reading the book were more likely to attend an event. Of every four teens and young adults who attended an event, three (76%) had read the book. The likelihood of attending an event (among students in our study) increased by age: 34-35% of those under 18 attended an event; 51-63% of adults aged 19-29; and 75-80% of those over 30. For these older students, participation was more likely to be required.

- Informal learning activities such as book discussions, companion books, field trips, or museum visits can also provide the structure and stimulus to engage teens and young adults in The Big Read. Holding high-profile events at schools or colleges helps guarantee a student audience and generates interest in Big Read books and events.

- Involvement by art, history, theatre, and music teachers, as well as English teachers, expands school and college participation and gives students other ways to connect to Big Read books. School, public, and youth librarians are strong allies in engaging teens and young adults.

- Events in which students take an active role—performers, exhibitors, discussants—can be highly effective in engaging students in The Big Read and building a bridge between school and community.

- Among the non-school events that attract students are those that engage them in thought-provoking discussions of controversial issues—censorship, alienation, immigration issues—or immerse them in arts and culture. Among the latter are intergenerational activities between seniors and young people.

- According to our focus groups and interviews with teachers, administrators, and librarians, the reasons teens and young adults don't participate in The Big Read are: they are initially intimidated by or uninterested in the titles, they are not aware of community activities, and they don't have time to read for pleasure or take advantage of activities.

- Based on data from over 300 teens and young adults completing a student checklist, indicates participation in The Big Read can lead to further literary reading activities.

    - Half (50%) of college/university students and nearly three-quarters (73%) of high school students had read another book since The Big Read. 10% of college/university students and 9% of high school students read another book suggested by The Big Read.

    - Over half of both college/university and high school students (53% and 54%, respectively) used the Internet to learn about, read, or discuss topics related to literature. Nearly half the college/university students and 16% of the high school students said that was a direct result of the Big Read.

    - Almost a quarter (24%) of college/university students and over half (52%) of high school students checked out a book for leisure reading from their public library. About one fifth of both groups (18% of college/university students and 20% of high school students) said they had done so as a result of the Big Read.

    - Over a quarter (27%) of college/university students and 16% of high school students attended a reading-related event; of these, 70% of college/university students and 38% of high school students said they did so because of the Big Read.

    - Nearly a fifth of college/university and high school students (17% and 18%, respectively) attended a program at their public library. Half (50%) of college/university students and 39% of high school students said this was due to the Big Read.

- Student checklist responses from 388 teens and young adults suggest that many are reading for pleasure and that there is some variety in what they read.

    - 50% of high school and college/university students reported spending more (and 50% less) than 30 minutes a day reading for pleasure. 82% read magazines and journals in their spare time; 81% read novels, and nearly 70%, newspapers. On average, college/university students spend less time reading for pleasure than high school students (27% of college students spend less than 15 minutes, as do 17% of high school students).

    - Overall, the youth in our study reported they still do most of their reading on paper; 43% of the teens and young adults in our study reported reading online blogs.

- The majority of youth in our study—68.4% of high school students; and 78.4% of college/university students (69% of all those 13-21)—say they would like to spend more time reading for pleasure. To do so, the majority (79%) said they simply need more time. About one-fifth said they would read more if they knew what to read. About a third (32%) said they would read more if they enjoyed it more

- The wide participation of schools—high school, community colleges and colleges and universities—as well as book clubs, and youth organizations is key to getting youth involved in the Big Read. Many grantees have built strong partnerships with schools and teachers and leveraged contacts from previous Big Reads.

SECTION 15: PARTICIPATION IN THE BIG READ BY TEENS AND YOUNG ADULTS

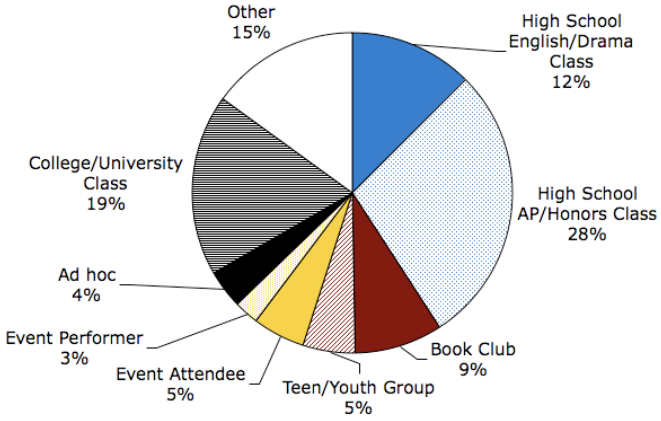
How are younger audiences participating in The Big Read, and what activities most successfully engage them?

This section, which begins with a description of the venues and composition of the 25 focus groups, looks at the activities and events that engage teens and young adults in The Big Read. The discussion looks at in-class or more structured activities, those that bridged school and community, and those that teens and young adults participated in independently of school. The findings come primarily from Phase 2, but also include some examples from Phase 1.

Focus Group Venues and Composition

With the help of Big Read coordinators, teachers, and librarians, we recruited focus group participants at high schools, colleges and universities, and public libraries. We also recruited ad hoc participants at these and other public places, including Student Unions or food courts on campuses, restaurants, coffee shops, and Big Read event venues. Figure 24 shows the affiliation of the 388 focus group participants.

Figure 24. Teens and Young Adults Who Participated in Focus Groups, by Affiliation



Source: Student Checklist (N=388)

High School and College Classes and Campuses

Over half of the focus groups took place on high school and college campuses: 12.4% in regular English or Drama classes, 28.4% in AP/Honors English classes; and 18.5% in college or university classes. School groups typically involved students who read The Big Read book as a class activity, but also included those who read the book as an optional assignment, and students who had not taken part in the program. In addition to English classes, focus group participants came from creative dramatics classes performing scenes from *My Ántonia* and *Fahrenheit 451*, and a Russian class in a residential math and science academy where students were reading *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* as part of an exchange with students in Russia. In the same community, we

met with a university Honors College group who participated in an *Ivan Ilyich* teleconference. Although the sample included more advanced English students (perhaps indicating that teachers in upper level or honors English classes more typically incorporate The Big Read book), we also talked to a reading class in a juvenile detention center; community college literacy classes—one of which included ESL students reading *Bless Me, Ultima*—and a university architectural design class who created a piece of wearable art based on *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. We also conducted a focus group with home-schooled students (3.6%).

Book Clubs

A small portion (9.0%) of our student sample came from student book clubs, which appear to be a fairly common feature in schools and public libraries. Again, these included a range of students. Two clubs, in two different high schools, involved 10-12 avid readers who met monthly over lunch with the school media specialist. Some students in both sites had participated in The Big Read as a class, some voluntarily, some not at all. We also met with a small group of boys, less avid readers, encouraged by a school librarian to read more. A group of middle-school girls who gathered outside of school at a local bookstore also took part in the study.

Library Volunteer and Teen Advocacy Groups

We conducted focus groups with students who routinely gather at public libraries after school, in some cases serving as volunteers for the Youth Librarian. These groups, 5.3% of the sample, also included students who had read The Big Read book (or a companion book) and some who had not. We met with a Teen Advocacy Group and with a group of teens who meet weekly at The Loft, a public library space set aside for community teens.

Big Read Events

Big Read events were the site of several focus groups and informal conversations with teens and young adults: 2.5% were performers, and 5.1%, attendees. We conducted interviews in conjunction with: a book discussion about *The Maltese Falcon* at a community college; readings from *Fahrenheit 451*, performed by public high school students at a military base library, for students and families from the base middle school; a public talk by a U.S. immigration official at a university; a dream interpretation workshop for students reading *Bless Me, Ultima*; and a discussion between high school students and university graduate students about *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. We conducted a telephone focus group with four students who had taken part in a teleconference with Cynthia Ozick, moderated by the NEA's Molly Thomas-Hicks.

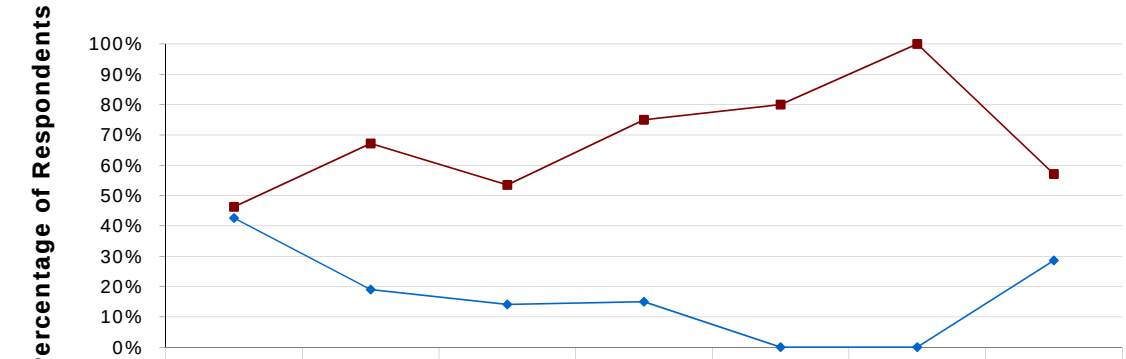
Just under three-fourths (70.9%, or 275) of these focus group participants had read or were reading The Big Read book, 40.7% (or 158) had attended a Big Read event, and 44.0% (or 170) had done both. Sixty-five students were non-participants.

Structured Participation

In-Class Reading

Interviews with students and teachers suggested that students are more likely to engage the program and its activities if there is some supervision to stimulate their initial participation. Incorporating The Big Read book into the curriculum is the most obvious way to get teens and young adults reading the book, and the majority of high school (61%) and college (57%) students in our focus groups who were reading the book were doing so because it was required. Analysis of teens' and young adults' mode of Big Read participation by age (as reported on the student checklist) suggests that had The Big Read not been a required component, some students would not have participated. Interestingly, this was especially true for focus group students between the ages of 26-34 (see Figure 25), an age group that other data suggest participate at lower rates.

Figure 25. Participation Patterns by Age



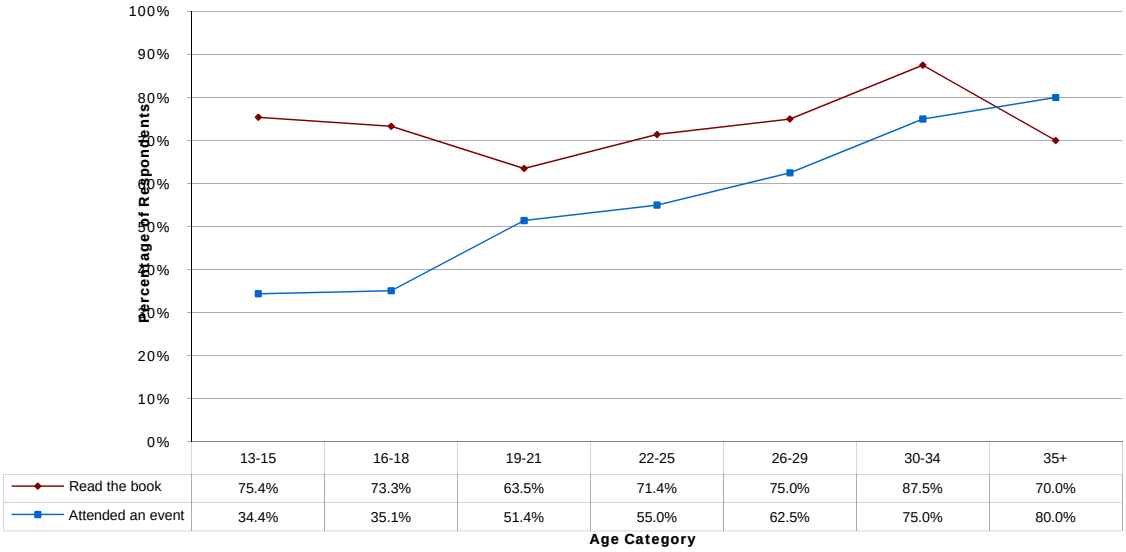
	13-15	16-18	19-21	22-25	26-29	30-34	35+
Voluntary	42.6%	19.0%	14.1%	15.0%	0.0%	0.0%	28.6%
Required	46.3%	67.2%	53.5%	75.0%	80.0%	100.0%	57.1%

Source: Student Checklist

Required Participation in Events

Requiring attendance or offering extra credit also appeared to increase students' participation in Big Read events. Many of the teens and young adults we talked to at events were there because a teacher had required or suggested attendance as an alternative to a book review or analytical essay. Checklist data also indicate that those teens and young adults who were reading the book were more likely to attend an event: of every four teens and young adults who attended an event, three (76%) had read or were reading the book. Among students in our study, the likelihood of attending an event increased by age: 34-35% of those under 18 attended an event; 51-63% of adults aged 19-29; and 75-80% of those over 30 (see Figure 26).

Figure 26. Percentages of Participants Who Read the Book and/or Attended an Event, by Age



	13-15	16-18	19-21	22-25	26-29	30-34	35+
Read the book	75.4%	73.3%	63.5%	71.4%	75.0%	87.5%	70.0%
Attended an event	34.4%	35.1%	51.4%	55.0%	62.5%	75.0%	80.0%

Source: Student Checklist

The relatively high numbers of students over 25 participating because it was required, and engaging in related activities afterwards (see p. 127), suggest that incorporating The Big Read into college and community college classes is an effective way to reach or ensure participation by this segment of the population. Focus group discussions further indicate that this is a demographic that may often be too busy to take part in The Big Read outside of a structured activity built into a daily routine. Among this group are first-generation college students, returning students, graduate students, those re-tooling to improve job skills and marketability, and those seeking to improve their English. University and junior or community college faculty also indicate that they are very interested in fresh ideas for literature or literacy classes and ways to engage this demographic.

Informal Learning Experiences

Book Discussions, Museum Visits, and Field Trips

Other informal reading activities were not mandatory provided some scaffolding for college-age and younger audiences. A program at the East Los Angeles Community College (ELACC) sponsored book giveaways and discussions led by a Chicano Studies professor. Discussions were so successful that faculty and students have requested that this become a regular campus event. The librarian who organized ELACC's activities is now a part of the East LA Public Library and may be able to facilitate further collaborations between the library and the community college.

One of the most unique youth programs involved a month-long series of book discussions at the Juvenile Hall Library. Teachers read the book to their students and distributed Reader's Guides.

The book resonated with the students, as evidenced by this observation from the final grant report: "Particularly at Juvenile Hall where many of the young people are at the crossroad of their life, Antonio's pull between identities—his family situation, the choice of American vs. Non-American life, the blending of cultures or between a gang or a non-gang existence were themes many experienced themselves."

School librarians and public library youth librarians encouraged middle and high school students unlikely to seek out classics or literary events to be a part of The Big Read through informal book clubs. A school librarian sponsoring the boys-only book club noted above helped three reluctant readers stick with *Fahrenheit 451,* even though it was difficult. Other youth librarians worked with middle and high school teachers to find reading-level appropriate companion books for The Big Read, often extending in-school reading to after-school environments.

Groups of students in Salinas, California visited an art exhibit at the Steinbeck Center, and many of the focus group students said the experience made the book come alive. The students live just a few miles from the Center, but many had never visited the museum. Other schools provided buses to transport students to Big Read events. Teachers also found that taking students from one school to another—especially connecting older students with younger ones—was very effective. School transportation budgets are tight, but Big Read funding or local sponsorship could provide students with enriching informal learning experiences. Students enjoy school-related activities that are also social occasions. Even some of our focus group teens and young adults participating in events outside of school indicated they went as a group.

School Venues

As in Phase 1, we found that holding high-profile Big Read events at schools not only guaranteed school-age audiences but also made a lasting impression on students genuinely flattered to host well-known figures. Fayetteville, North Carolina focus group students recalled a school talk by Bradbury biographer, Sam Weller. A visit by Junot Díaz, one of western North Carolina's Together We Read's *My Ántonia* events, prompted lively discussions among college audiences. In Aspen, Colorado (see sidebar), a school with a large Latino population hosted author Luis Alberto Urrea, a visit that gave students and other Latinos in the community an opportunity to discuss *Bless Me, Ultima.* In Waukee, Iowa, performances of "Life in a Jar," a play about the life of Irena Sandler, who rescued 2,500 children in the Warsaw Ghetto, engaged elementary and secondary school audiences. An Internet discussion with Cynthia Ozick, another

While in the Valley for The Big Read, Urrea visited Roaring Fork High School, where half the student population is Latino. As the Aspen Writers Project wrote in their final narrative, Urrea was able to engage the students and their parents "in a way that the AWF has never been able to do." Before Urrea left the Valley, the Hispanic staff at the Aspen Alps Condominiums, where Urrea and his family stayed, hosted a homemade Mexican lunch in his honor. They joined Urrea in a Spanish discussion about Bless Me, Ultima *that Urrea described to the AWF as "was one of the most touching events" he had ever done. (Aspen Writers Project, CO)*

Waukee event held in connection with *The Shawl*, proved that visits need not be in person to excite student audiences.

Events that Bridge School and Community

Other findings confirmed what we had learned earlier about the value of giving students active, hand-on roles in Big Read events and building bridges between school and community.

Student as Essayists

Some grantees reported fewer entries than anticipated for essay contests, but others reported great success. Grantees often used topics or questions from The Big Read Reader's or Teacher's Guide for the essay. The above-mentioned Internet conversation with Cynthia Ozick included comments on student essays, feedback that neither students nor their English teacher are likely to forget.

Students as Artists Displaying their Work to the Public

Some of the most eager teen and young adult participants were those who had a role in The Big Read as artists creating not only a class project but also a public exhibit. Students created wearable art (see sidebar) murals, book covers, and illustrations related to The Big Read book; in some sites students had formal openings and their artwork was on sale to the public. Big Read organizers in East LA sponsored a teen art contest that attracted entrants from five participating libraries. The second-place winner explained that he had spent a great deal of time thinking about how to incorporate the themes from *Bless Me, Ultima* into his artwork, and, never having won anything before, was stunned at his award.

The University of Louisiana integrated Their Eyes Were Watching God *into a number of departments and classes. Many English and History professors teach the novel, and supplemented their materials with The Big Read CD and Reader's Guide. Dr. Hector Lasala at the University's Architecture and Design College had his students put on a fashion show based on the book. Students read* Their Eyes Were Watching God *and selected passages to create a series of small projects leading up to a piece of wearable art made with nontraditional materials (e.g., tires, broken mirrors, crawfish nets). The project culminated with a sold-out community fashion show at the Acadiana Center for the Arts. Students heard many audience members expressing interest in reading the book after seeing the students' work. (Acadiana Center for the Arts, Lafayette, LA)*

From late October through mid-December, Weeksville Heritage Center (WHC) piloted "To Kill a Mockingbird: The Remix," in which high school students worked with adult teaching artists to discuss TKAM and present their own versions of key moments in the novel. The youth worked with a graphic designer to remix the text of the book by treating words as images to convey the emotion and moral of the story. Groups of students worked on separate sections of the book, analyzing pivotal moments and characters through excerpts. The works created through the project will be exhibited in one of the historic houses at WHC as part of a community-wide open house event. WHC's Book

Remix utilized graphic design to attract teenagers. The program was beneficial to both avid readers and non-readers, because it provided them with a new perspective on literature and gave them new tools for accessing great works of literature. The pilot "Book Remix" project succeeded in giving youth new tools for interpreting literature. The youth who participated were fully engaged during the two-hour workshops, and two sessions even lasted four hours." (Brooklyn Public Library, NY)

Students as Actors, Directors, and Readers

Phase 2 site visits and reviews of Phase 1 final reports turned up numerous examples of events for which students performed scenes from The Big Read novels. Some were informal readings, with book in hand and minimal props: in Fayetteville, North Carolina, high school students acted out scenes from *Fahrenheit 451* using only chairs and, for fireman Guy Montague's wife, an iPod and earbuds for the "seashells." Others were more elaborate, but both were successful with student performers and student audiences.

Our biggest success as far as participation was the play of "The Season of La Llorona" performed by the South East High School Theater Department. The two-night performance drew approximately 350 people, more than their performance of "Grease" the year before. (Los Angeles Public Library, CA)

A freshman theater class [in the Theater Department of Columbia and Barnard] spent the entire fall 2007 semester developing a performance titled "Mockingbird,"…a creative performance based on the court scene of the book, and using the script from the movie. At the end of the semester, they ran two evening shows for the public, and one daytime performance for middle school children participating in The Big Read. Students both on stage and in the audience seemed to benefit from the experience and were engaged with the themes of the book (Columbia University, NY)

Popular Community Events

Successful community events unrelated to schools shared a common trait and echoed what we learned about events that worked well with other audiences: these events engaged students in important issues in participatory ways. Among the events students found most memorable were thought-provoking discussions of controversial issues or big themes—the hardships of migrant workers, mistreatment of immigrant populations, a Russian official pondering imminent death. Other events, often intergenerational, immersed students in art and culture. As one teacher said, she could interest students in The Big Read book from a "literary or academic" point of view,

…,but not the social aspect. I think the fact that there were community events and they knew other people were reading the book made a big difference. It helps a lot, this connection that happens when you discuss a book. (Muncie Public Library, IN)

- Community discussions of censorship and the society portrayed in *Fahrenheit 451* were of particular interest to students. They related to the technology (earbud="seashells") and themes alienation. Many were eager to read other books on libraries' "censored" lists.

- Events that connected students to those with authentic experience were also popular. Stories shared by Holocaust survivors drew students in Waukee, Iowa, to Ozick's *The Shawl*. High school and university faculty in Muncie, Indiana, reported that a teleconference with Vladimir Tolstoy, the author's great-great grandson, prompted "a surprising number" of students to attend the "Russia Revealed" and "Tolstoy Revealed" events and enriched discussions of *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*.

- Not all events were gloomy. In connection with *Bless Me, Ultima*, the Aspen Writers Project invited scholars and artists to the Roaring Fork Valley, and drew on puppetry and storytelling talents of Valley artists to bring younger and older audiences together to celebrate literature, the arts, and a shared heritage.

The Big Read included visits from Anaya scholar and author Denise Chavez and the Grammy-nominated vocalist Perla Batalla. At each event, audiences were invited to experience Anaya's writing through their senses—hearing the story read aloud in Spanish and listening to the songs and tunes that Anthony's mother or Ultima might have sung or hummed as they worked; seeing the colors in the dance, art, and puppetry; tasting the horchata; feeling the clay in the fingers of small hands as they shaped roadrunners during library story hour, and stitching pieces of a quote quilt together, as words penned by Anaya years ago were scribed to visually display their power to readers today. They wrote their favorite lines from the book on the Bless Me, Ultima *Quote Quilt, a "traveling, growing work of art" testifying to the resonance of the book with a wide range of readers. Aspen Writers Project, CO*

Why Teens and Young Adults Don't Participate

Our case studies were also intended to learn why teens and young adults don't participate. A few students said that events seemed uninteresting or designed for older citizens, and some indicated that they were unlikely to change reading habits or seek out reading-related events.

- The bigger stumbling block seems to be that Big Read books often present an initial challenge. Members of the East Los Angeles Library Teen Advisory Board, who read and discussed *Bless Me, Ultima*, acknowledged that this was not the kind of book that they would normally read on their own. When they have a chance to read for pleasure, many preferred nonfiction, including biographies and autobiographies, or older classics by Hemingway and Fitzgerald. Ninth graders in another focus group had difficulty identifying with the characters in *Bless Me, Ultima* and would have preferred to read about contemporary issues such as those featured in the book *Always Running* (a memoir about life in a Los Angeles gang).

Some students came to feel they could relate to *Bless Me, Ultima* as they got further into the book. Most came from predominantly Spanish-speaking homes, and observed that a book available in Spanish with a particular cultural focus was more appealing than other books. Some said they had family members who believed in curanderas, and at least one had talked to her mother about the portrayal of healers in the novel. All students had used the Reader's Guide and appreciated the background information on the author. A few students had gone to Big Read lectures to learn more about the author and the novel's religious context.

- Aside from reading challenges, many students weren't taking part in Big Read events because they didn't know about them. Some remembered hearing parents talk about The Big Read, but surprisingly few were aware of particular events, even those targeted to teens. This did not seem due to a lack of promotion: grantees have distributed calendars and made presentations to schools, and banners and posters are prominently displayed. On a community college campus, two glass cases that students passed when entering the library and technology center promoted The Big Read and *The Maltese Falcon* with a film noir display and photos from the Bogart movie. But unless students were actively involved in or hosting to events, or required to attend, many were unaware of the larger program.

- The reason most often cited by students and teachers alike is that students don't have time. High school students say that homework, sports, music, or school government take up a large portion of their after-school and evening hours. College students, too, say that their studies take a lot of time. Younger and older students often have responsibilities at home or take care of siblings or children. Many in both groups not only work but put in surprisingly long hours. These were also the reasons students gave for not reading more in general (see p. 136).

Perceived Impact of Participation

To add to anecdotal feedback about the impact of participation, we asked students who had attended an event (n=158) and/or read The Big Read book (n=275) to respond to checklist items asking whether they had engaged in reading activities since The Big Read and whether they did so as a result of the program. (We planned visits toward the end of local Big Reads, and in some cases asked teachers to administer and return checklists later.) Responses indicated that:

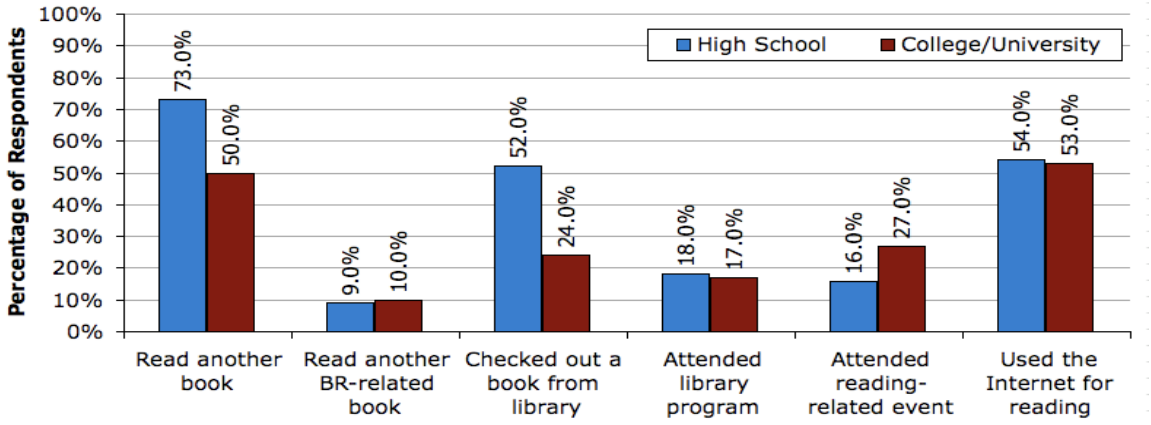
- Since The Big Read, two-thirds of the students (64.5% or 194 students) had read another book—not surprising for high school or college students. What is surprising is that half (50%) of college/university students and nearly three-quarters (73%) of the college students said they did so because of The Big Read. Although only 10% of college/university students and 9% of high school students read another book suggested by The Big Read. Many students, 75% of college/university students and 41% of high school students, said they did so because of their Big Read participation. See Figures 27 and 28.

- Half of both age groups (53% and 54%, respectively) used the Internet to learn about, read, or discuss topics related to literature, novels, poetry, or plays literature after The Big Read. Nearly half the older group, and 16% of younger students, said resulted from the program.

- Almost a fourth (24%) of college/university students and over half (52%) of high school students checked out a book for leisure reading from their public library; about one-fifth of both groups attributed this to The Big Read.

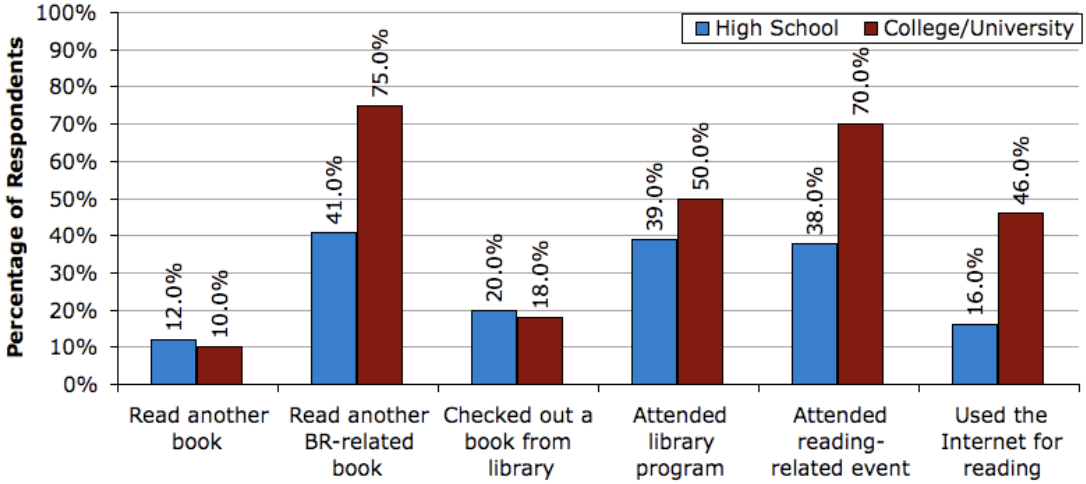
- Fewer students—27% of college/university students and 16% of high school students—attended a reading-related event, but significant numbers; 70% of the former and 38% of the latter did so because of The Big Read. Relatively few high school and college groups (17% and 18%) attended a public library program but percentages saying it was due to The Big Read (50% and 39%) were notable.

Figure 27. Reading Activities since The Big Read



Source: Student Checklist (N=388)

Figure 28. If YES, was this as a result of the Big Read?



Source: Student Checklist

A comparison of these responses to participant follow-up survey responses (completed by a different demographic)[24] showed that these teens and young adults had engaged in reading-related events after The Big Read at lower rates than the follow-up group. However, for two activities—attending a reading related event and a library program—the younger group was more likely to credit the activity to The Big Read. (See Table 62.)

Table 62. Teens' and Young Adults' Reports of Reading Activities after The Big Read

	Engaged in Activity		Attributed to The Big Read	
	Teens, Young Adult Population	Older Population	Teens, Young Adult Population	Older Population
Used the Internet for reading	53.2%	64.4%	27.6%	42.9%
Attended reading-related event	19.9%	43.5%	50.0%	31.3%
Attended library program	17.6%	47.9%	41.4%	36.3%
Checked out a book from the library	41.3%	75.2%	18.5%	29.5%

Source: Student Checklist, Participant Follow-up Survey

[24] The latter group (N=755) was mostly white (86%), female (79%), well-educated (77% hold a bachelor's degree or higher), and 55 or older. For the checklist group, less time had elapsed since their Big Read participation.

SECTION 16: THE READING HABITS OF TEENS AND YOUNG ADULTS

What Students Read, Why They Don't, and How The Big Read Might Make a Difference

Responses to the reading checklist from the 388 students in the focus groups also provided insights into the reading habits and preferences of teens and young adults, and ways The Big Read might take advantage of both. While it may be that those in our focus groups, sometimes accompanied by teachers or librarians, overstated their reading activities on the checklist, most appeared candid in their comments about reading, some expressing genuine excitement about the books and authors they enjoy, some describing how they read less and enjoy it less than they did when they were younger, and some clearly indicating that they would much prefer to talk to friends, listen to music, play video games, or surf the Internet than read.

What Students Read

Responses indicate that, overall, these teens and young adults are reading for pleasure: The genres or texts the largest percentage of students read in their spare time are magazines (82%) and novels (81%). Nearly 70% said they read newspapers, though we do not know if they read them daily nor what they read in newspapers.[25] Almost two-thirds read song lyrics, young adult fiction, short stories, and non-fiction. Over half read poetry, mysteries, humor, comic books, plays, and science fiction. Even the genres students chose less frequently—children's books, self-help books, cookbooks, travel books—were selected by between a fifth and a third of the respondents.

Table 63 shows the number and percentage of respondents reporting that they read the genres on the list, in descending order.

[25] One study, conducted by the Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy, published in July, 2007, found that 9% of teens (under 18) and 16% of those aged 18-30 reported reading newspapers every day, although they were more likely than older adults to "skim" than "read."

Table 63. Which of the following do you read for pleasure or for personal interests, and in what format?
(N=336; Teens/Young Adults, aged 13-21)

Genre	Number of teens/young adults who read		Format		
	Number	Percent	On paper	Online	Both
Magazines, journals	274	81.5%	57.4%	2.1%	22.0%
Novels	271	80.7	75.0	.6	5.1
Newspapers	231	68.8	41.1	6.0	21.7
Song lyrics/liner notes	218	64.9	19.0	23.8	22.0
Young adult fiction	214	63.7	55.4	1.2	7.1
Short stories	212	63.1	51.8	3.3	8.0
Non-fiction/factual books	209	62.2	51.5	1.5	9.2
Poetry	195	58.0	37.2	3.0	17.9
Mystery literature	193	57.4	50.6	1.2	5.7
Humor/joke books	181	53.9	33.6	4.5	15.8
Comic books/comic strips	177	52.7	37.5	3.9	11.3
Plays	177	52.7	43.5	2.1	7.1
Science fiction	168	50.0	40.8	3.3	6.0
Romance novels	165	49.1	44.3	.6	4.2
Religious or inspirational books	159	47.3	42.6	1.2	3.6
Blogs	147	43.8	NA	43.8	NA
Catalogues	145	43.2	24.4	3.6	15.2
Graphic (sequential) novels	136	40.5	31.0	2.1	7.4
Children's books	132	39.3	36.9	.9	1.5
Cookbooks	128	38.1	25.9	1.5	10.7
Travel books/guides	101	30.1	15.8	5.4	8.9
Self-help books	91	27.1	18.5	3.3	5.4
Health/diet books	89	26.5	14	6.2	6.2
Technical manuals	72	21.4	14.3	2.4	4.8
Business/finance guides	52	15.5	6.8	5.4	3.3

Although we talked to students who ran the gamut from avid readers to those not likely to read unless teachers required it, focus group conversations also confirmed that many students read when they have time. In almost every group, we encountered, among females, fans of Stephenie Meyer and Jodi Picoult; and, among males, *Harry Potter* and the *Lord of the Rings* fans, or those who said they liked fantasy. This preference seems to extend from middle school to high school through college: one professor noted that courses on Fantasy and Folklore "fill up quickly and have waiting lists a mile long."

Graphic novels are popular among middle and high school students. Most libraries included prominent displays of graphic novels, which ranged from Japanese manga to Art Spiegilman's *Maus* to biographies of baseball players (their covers indistinguishable from traditional biographies for young adult readers), to graphic novels designed to appeal to girls. Teenagers in

urban areas reported that they enjoy and relate to urban fiction or "ghetto" books, set in cities and about contemporary issues and lifestyles of African-American youth. Several focus group participants mentioned the author Zane, adding that they liked her books because the characters share their experiences. Young adult librarians confirmed the popularity of these authors, and their efforts to keep good young adult fiction on the shelves.

We also encountered fans of the Brontës, Jane Austen, and other classic authors. One high school senior said that she preferred classics to urban fiction because she prefers *not* to read about people like her and issues she experiences day to day. Another student had engaged in a yearlong reading contest with her sister: both logged 52 books. This student was also working on a novel. High school boys, some noting that they suspected there were more *Harry Potter* fans among their peers than would admit to it, explained that reading is not always considered cool.

Online Reading and Electronic Communication

Teachers and professors expressed some concern about technology competing with books, but the youth in our study reported they do most of their reading on paper; percentages for paper formats exceed online or both (paper and online) except in the case of music lyrics and encyclopedias (see Table 64 and Table 65). Another exception are blogs, which are only available online; 43% of the teens and young adults in our study reported reading blogs online.

Consistent with other surveys of teens and the Internet, the teens and young adults in our focus groups were active online—reading and writing email, text messages, instant messages, and in social networking sites.

Table 64. Teens' and Young Adults' Use of Electronic Communication

	Teens/young adults reading online communications	
	Number	Percent
Email	273	81.2%
Text messages	235	69.9%
IM	150	44.6%
Social networking websites	250	74.4%

Source: Student Checklist

As Table 65 shows, there is a shift by teens and young adults to online encyclopedias and reference tools like Wikipedia. The number of teens and young adults who consult encyclopedias online or who use both online and print volumes is slightly higher than those who only use bound editions. Just over half of teens and young adults report using Wikipedia, and may use other online reference tools as well.

Table 65. Teens' and Young Adults' Use of Reference Tools

Resource	Teens/Young adults who read references materials		Format		
	Number	Percent	On paper	Online	Both
Encyclopedias	145	43.2%	13.4%	13.7%	16.1%
Wikipedia	177	52.7%	NA	52.4%	NA

Source: Student Checklist

When asked about reading online or in downloadable formats, the students we interviewed said they prefer books "they can take with them." They are curious about Kindle and other tools for downloading and reading fiction, but don't see these being cheap and durable enough anytime soon to change their reading habits. One student noted that he likes the fact that he doesn't have to worry about cramming a paperback into a backpack or getting coffee on it, or even leaving it somewhere; he couldn't feel that way about a purchase as expensive—currently—as Kindle.

We also asked students whether they considered the online browsing and communicating they do "reading." Most said "no," although they, like most teens and young adults, engage in these activities frequently. Some added that the electronic messages weren't even so much communicating as "setting up" a time and place to meet, so they could communicate.

How Much Time Students Spend Reading

Overall, an equal number of those in the sample spent less than 15 minutes reading for pleasure every day as did those who read for an hour or more. College and university students spent less time reading for pleasure per day than high school students: The norm for high school students is between 15-30 minutes per day, while slightly more college students spend less than 15 minutes per day. In our focus groups, students explained that all the reading they have to do for classes reduces the time they spend reading for pleasure. Community college students were often spending what might be leisure time—or time not spent on the job—taking classes.

Based on a comparison between student checklist responses and The Big Read participant survey responses, the high school students in our focus groups read, on average, slightly more per day than the under 18 respondents to The Big Read participant survey; averages for the college/university group completing the checklist, and 18-24 group completing the participant survey, are very similar. (See Table 66.)

Table 66. Time Spent Reading Daily

	Less than 15 minutes	15-30 minutes	30-45 minutes	45 minutes-1 hour	1 hour or more
Checklist, High School (n=221)	16.8%	34.1%	15.0%	14.5%	19.5%
Checklist, College/ University (n=120)	26.7%	25.0%	18.1%	13.8%	16.4%
Checklist, Age 13-21 (n=336)	18.5%	32.2%	16.7%	14.0%	18.5%
Big Read Participant Survey, Under 18 (n=444)	35.4%	25.5%	14.4%	10.8%	14.0%
Big Read Participant Survey,18-24 (n=388)	27.1%	29.9%	18.6%	10.8%	13.7%

Source: Student Checklist, Big Read Participant Survey

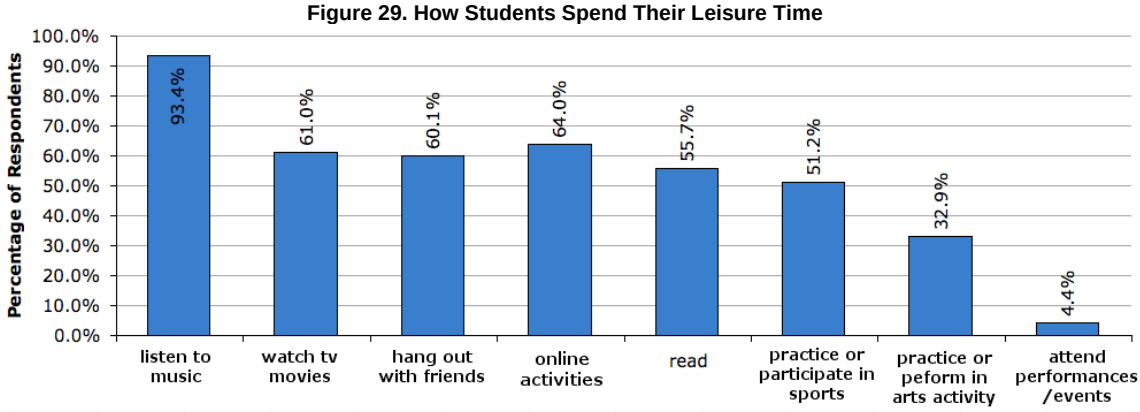
How does reading compare to the other leisure activities? Teens and young adults (aged 13-21) rank reading (M=4.33) below listening to music (M=4.93), watching TV or movies (M=4.54), hanging out with friends (M=4.47), or being online (M=4.46); but above exercise and sports (M=4.13), music and arts practices (M=3.24), and attending arts events (M=2.7). The means for the subgroup of college/university students shows reading in 4th with a mean of 4.34, slightly below hanging out with friends (M=4.36) and above watching TV and movies (M=4.25).

Table 67. How do you like to spend your free time?

	High School (n=221)		College/University (n=120)	
	Mean*	% Almost daily	Mean	% Almost daily
Listen to music	4.93	92.3%	4.90	92.3%
Watch TV, movies	4.57	62.7	4.25	50.8
Hang out with friends	4.39	58.0	4.36	55.1
Online activities	4.38	60.4	4.62	76.5
Read	4.31	55.9	4.34	57.5
Participate in sports, exercise, outdoor activities	4.08	51.8	3.84	31.9
Practice music, perform in arts activities, events	3.27	35.0	2.69	17.7
Attend arts performances/events	2.69	5.2	2.61	2.6

Source: Student Checklist.
*Means calculated on a 5-pt scale, where 1=Never or hardly ever; 2=A few times a year; 3=Once or twice a month; 4=Once or twice a week; 5=Almost every day

Figure 29. How Students Spend Their Leisure Time



Source: Student Checklist

Table 68 shows that over half of the high school students and college/university students in the study were reading for pleasure almost every day, about 30% once or twice a week. 15.9% of secondary students and 13.3% of post-secondary students in the study were not reading for pleasure at least once a week.

Table 68. Frequency of Reading as a Leisure Activity

	Almost every day	Once or twice a week	Once or twice a month	A few times a year	Never or hardly ever
Teens/Young Adults, aged 13-21 (n=336)	55.7%	29.9%	8.7%	2.7%	3.0%
High School (n=221)	55.9%	28.2%	10.5%	1.8%	3.6%
College/University (n=120)	57.5%	29.2%	5.8%	5.0%	2.5%

Source: Student Checklist

More Reading

In fact, teens/young adults would like to be reading *more*. The majority of youth in our study say they would like to spend more time per week reading for pleasure: 69% of all those 13-21; 68.4% of high school students; and 78.4% of college/university students.

Table 69. Are you happy with the amount of time you read on a weekly basis for pleasure?

	Yes	No, and I would like to read more	Yes, but I would like to read more	No, but I don't want to read more
Teens/Young Adults, aged 13-21 (n=336)	30.1%	43.7%	25.3%	.9%
High School (n=221)	31.2%	41.3%	27.1%	.1%
College/University (n=120)	20%	56.7%	21.7%	1.7%

Source: Student Checklist

We asked students what it would take for them to read more. On the survey and in focus groups, the majority of students (79%) said they simply need more time, adding "School competes with reading!" Over half said they would read more if what they read was of more interest. About a third (32%) said they would read more if they enjoyed it more; 1 in 5 respondents (aged 13-21) said they would read more if they could afford to buy more reading materials (e.g., books and magazines). About the same number (20%) said they would read more if they knew what to read.

Table 70. I would read more if:

	Teens/Young Adults, aged 13-21 (n=336)	High School (n=221)	College/ University (n=120)
I had more time.	79.2%	76.5%	83.3%
It was about subjects I am interested in.	55.7	54.8	50
I enjoyed it more.	31.8	34.4	24.2
I could afford to buy more books or magazines.	21.4	19.9	25.8
I knew what to read.	20.2	16.7	16.7
My friends read more.	10.1	10.9	6.7
Books had more pictures.	9.5	9.5	7.5
Stories and books were shorter.	9.5	9	12.5
I had better access to a library.	9.2	11.3	5
I could download more reading materials.	8.9	11.3	6.7
Someone read aloud to me or I had books on tape.	8.3	8.6	5.8
My parent(s)/teacher(s)/adults(s) encouraged me more.	7.7	7.2	5
Reading was easier for me.	7.1	5.4	10.8
My school encouraged me more.	5.7	5.9	5
I could find more reading materials in the language we speak at home.	2.4	2.3	5

Source: Student Checklist

Explaining responses, students said that, other than having more time, they might read more if:

- They were given more opportunities for leisure reading for school. Students suggested more titles on recommended reading lists and fewer on required lists, to give them more time to discover and read what they enjoy.

- Required reading took less time. High school students explained that once they finish their required reading every night, they aren't inclined to pick up a book—but more likely to relax by listening to music, watching TV, or going online.

- They liked reading more. There were those in almost every group who said they didn't read because they just didn't enjoy it—they would rather do other things in their leisure time.

- They were aware of authors and titles similar to those they already read and love. Students were enthusiastic about the series or authors they are fans of, but admit they are probably missing other great books because they don't know about them. While they are waiting for new releases by familiar authors, they would be willing to "read around" in genres they like.

- Reading was more of a social activity. Many said they get recommendations of books from friends and enjoy the conversations they have with friends about those books.

- Reading was related to the kinds of things they are interested in and passionate about. Teens would welcome more time, bigger budgets, and increased opportunities to read widely—about sports, entertainment, politics, and other areas of interest.

SECTION 17: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE BIG READ

What Role The Big Read Can Play in Increasing Literary Reading among Teens and Young Adults

Our conversations with students, librarians, teachers, and administrators suggest that teens and young adults may need a way into The Big Read novels, and that the events described can provide that conduit. There are certainly many teachers and librarians eager to shepherd students through: those trying to keep students reading no matter what the material, and those who want students to read good if not great books. To Read or Not To Read came up a few times, and while some librarians said they did not think the situation was as dire as the report portrayed it, based on the circulation of young adult fiction and range of books and ideas students brought to book club discussions, all are excited about what The Big Read can do to inspire an interest in reading.

The challenge may not be that most students don't read or don't enjoy reading. Checklist data from our focus groups indicate that some students read a lot and want to read more—for pleasure. There is variety in what they read, and with online resources, social networking, and graphic novels, they may be developing literacies unavailable to previous generations. Listing the languages he read in, other than English, one student mentioned Japanese manga. We don't know whether he reads kanji or "reads" the illustrations, but it is a new form of reading.

There may be too much reading matter vying for students' attention, and they may lack, as one professor said, that cultural literacy or base that enriches classroom and public discourse—so that he doesn't have to explain film noir or detective fiction as a genre when discussing The Maltese Falcon. But our findings suggest that this knowledge is not out of students' reach. Many are drawn to universal themes, big ideas, and classic literature. In one interesting round-robin discussion, students said most assigned reading was boring, then described what they did enjoy, adding, in turn: love stories, romantic intrigue, drama, action, violence, and characters closer to their own age—and concluding that two of their favorite school texts were Romeo and Juliet and Hamlet. They liked these because teachers had had them read out loud, role-play, view films, giving the students a way into the text.

With some guidance, students often seemed to have a surprisingly strong grasp of the themes of The Big Read books and be surprised at how modern and relevant they are: Like the student who thought The Death of Ivan Ilyich was written 20 years ago and was surprised to learn it was written in 1886. Or the many students awed by Bradbury's prophetic descriptions of technology and the seashells that so eerily prefigured the earbuds connected to their MP3 players.

Our data also suggest that The Big Read had an impact on students beyond their initial participation in the program. The following bullets describe ways that The Big Read can continue to engage student audiences.

- Continue to encourage school, community college, and university partnerships and the participation of English, theatre, art, history, and other faculties, which seem to be essential to securing the participation of teens and young adults. Grantees with second grants have already leveraged contacts from the first round and forged new partnerships.

- Keep teachers informed, and approach them early enough to change their reading lists or syllabus to incorporate The Big Read. The adjusted schedule should allow grantees and teachers to find a place for The Big Read in an already packed curriculum and find the right contacts.

- Encourage high school and colleges to give students roles, host events, consider informal learning opportunities, and promote events—to ensure that schools aren't silos, reading the book independent of community events.

- The Big Read obviously has strong allies among school, public, and youth librarians. They, along with teachers, could be involved in the process of selecting Big Read titles. Working with teen advisory boards or other youth groups, ask teens how The Big Read can include youth, and incorporate their ideas for marketing to youth. Perhaps have some online voting that kids can contribute to. Have them help build the list of additional books appealing to their age group matched with those chosen for The Big Read.

- Reach out to a wide range of institutions and organizations that serve or draw youths. For example, high school students who were part of a community action team worked with adult mentors to coordinate a spoken word/open mic event for youth.

- Continue to design events that engage teens and young adults in literature through dialogue, music, and the arts. Such events stimulated connections between great books and popular literary forms, such as spoken word poetry. Choose venues where students gather or feel comfortable and incorporate The Big Read into existing popular events for youth. Plan Big Read events around food and music, showings of the film, and on the weekends. Make book discussions informal affairs. Invite teens to participate as volunteers and partners in The Big Read, distributing Big Read materials and helping at events. Encourage all partners, venues, teachers, and student participants to use The Big Read materials.

- Publish online and/or in the Organizer's Guide strategies and practices for building strong and successful partnerships with schools and teachers. Collect ideas (by book title) from past and participating Big Read grantees.

- Update the Teacher's Guides with lesson plans from participating Big Read teachers that meet national standards. Consider creating a page on the Web site with resources for teachers. Publish Audio Guide DVDs that would provide a visual dimension to the book and could contain supplemental materials teachers could use (e.g., video-taped interviews with the author, biographer, scholars, historians, playwrights, movie producers). Also consider a blog for teachers to share what's working for them and their grade and student characteristics.

- Teens and young adults are online. Make Big Read resources (Reader's Guides, Audio Guides) available online for teens to read and listen/download. Build pages for each of the Big Read titles for students who want to learn more about the author, themes, time period, as well as reviews, interesting facts, FAQs, and links to other titles readers might enjoy. Grantees could also provide a link from their website to the page for their selected Big Read title. Online resources are also more readily available to teachers to use in the classroom. With today's Web 2.0 technology, it is also possible to provide a blog by an expert and have teens and young adults publish to the site and post comments and links to other sites.

- Take advantage of new and available technologies, and draw on the experience of grantees who've used them effectively. Some have involved schools and students in non-traditional settings through online classes, teleconferences, online forums for teens, or held book discussions between schools via distance learning technology. These have been effective in tying rural communities together, linking middle and high school students or high school and college students, as well as prison and juvenile detention center populations. Use digital literacies to engage students with The Big Read novel.

- Put books in the hands of students and teachers.

According to some of the students we talked with at the Glenwood Learning Lab, it was the choice of the novel that attracted them to The Big Read. Bless Me, Ultima *was included as one of the recommended books, but it was the title, front cover illustration, and Anaya's name that caught the attention of several of the women. "Me as a Hispanic, I wanted to learn a little more about the author because I heard he was Hispanic also," said one. Several in the group agreed when one woman explained, "when I started reading it, I thought he [Antonio] was experiencing some of the same things I have been experiencing." To illustrate, another member of the class said, "Like my religion, I'm Catholic, and my family looks like his [Antonio's] family. My dad is more like a 'vaquero.'" The students in the reading class—and a few others who had picked up a free copy of the book on campus—said that because they were so engrossed in the novel, they had read more each day than they typically do and were now interested in reading a similar book. Some said they had wanted to participate in more Big Read events, but due to their schedules or lack of transportation, were not able to. They noted that they don't often get a free book, and that inspired them to read it. They also had heard a lot of people talking about the book—and commented about the rarity of that phenomenon as well.*

Part Six

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The title of this report refers to The Big Read as a national book club with local chapters, calling attention to the interplay between federal sponsorship and local implementation. Reference to book clubs also hints, perhaps a little less obviously, to the fact that The Big Read was designed to get people reading *and* talking about books, making what is often a private activity also a public, shared experience. We believe The Big Read's impact is most apparent in these two areas. The funding, prestige, excitement, and resources that came with being part of The Big Read helped grantees enlist partners—over 10,000 nationwide in the first year and a half—who provided endorsements, promotion, programming, venues, in-kind support, and new audiences.

Their collective efforts not only resulted in over 16,000 events and book discussions that attracted over a million readers all across the country, but also gave rise to more initiatives: more Big Reads, which continue to bring communities together, around a different title, and Little Reads, for which communities select a regional, contemporary, or non-fiction title that delights, instructs, or defines them as a community. Readers want to keep the conversation going—the hypothetical "What if everyone read the same book?" has morphed into a local and more personal, in some instances, literal "What page are you on?" badge of honor—and communities are committed to extending their reach and bringing even more people into the conversation.

Key Findings

- *Participants were, overall, very positive about The Big Read book and the idea of a Big Read in their community.* Data from multiple instruments show that most respondents thought that reading The Big Read book was a good choice for their communities and that reading it was a very worthwhile thing to do. Nearly two-thirds of the respondents had, as part of The Big Read, attended a literary event at a public library or checked out a book or tape. Fewer had attended an event at a museum, university, or other institution, or joined a book club, but two-thirds said that participating in The Big read made them more comfortable doing so. Even more, over 90%, said they wanted to engage in other activities like these. The majority said they would like to take part in another Big Read.

- *Even among people who love to read, The Big Read has had a marked impact, with sizeable percentages of participants reporting increases in reading or literary activity after the program and even because of it.* As a group, Big Read participants tend to be more avid readers than the general public or the representative sample who responded to the SPPA survey. Almost twice as many had read a book in the 12 months prior to the program. Over

half had read at least one book per month; almost a third, twice that many. Around 45% reported reading for pleasure 45 minutes or more a day.

Still, the program changed their behavior. During The Big Read, over half of those reading at least 45 minutes a day attended a literary event, joined a book club, and attended a museum or university event—and a third did these things for the first time. Survey respondents said they enjoyed reading a book they would not have selected on their own, or had they not been part of a larger community read and an even larger national initiative to rally interest in reading great literature. They also described events and conversations that would not have occurred without The Big Read.

After The Big Read, one in five said they read more books than they did before. Many had also checked a book out of the library, purchased a book, used the Internet to learn about topics related to literature, or attended another reading-related event—a third had done these things because of The Big Read. Some readers (29%) reported that what they choose to read, where they find books, and their willingness to engage others in was affected by participation.

- *Though attendance and impact figures were smaller, teens, young adults, and less avid readers were also attracted to Big Read activities and reported changes in reading behaviors during, after, and as a result of the program.* During The Big Read, young adults aged 18-24, though participating in smaller numbers, were more likely than younger or older readers to be attending a library event and getting a library card for the first time, as were those who reported reading less than 15 minutes a day for pleasure. Between half and three fourths of the participating college and high school students read another book after The Big Read and used the Internet to learn about, read, or discuss topics related to literature. Nearly half of the college/university students and some (16%) of the high school students said that was a direct result of The Big Read.

  Survey responses indicate that efforts in Phase 2 of The Big Read to involve younger audiences produced positive results: percentages of participants under 18 rose from 5% to 18%; percentages of 18-24 year olds, from 7% to 14%.

- *Grantees reported that there was still "work to be done" in engaging more diverse and hard-to-reach audiences, but also described extensive outreach and modest successes.* Overall, around three-fourths of the grantee survey respondents cited increases in their capacity to attract audiences (73%), attract diverse audiences (70%), and meet the needs of target populations (74%). As part of new outreach, grantees expanded programming, formed new partnerships, and took events to new audiences and areas not always accommodated by or drawn to arts and literary institutions. These audiences included children, Latino audiences, non-native speakers, and incarcerated populations.

Response rates and survey distribution no doubt play a role, but participation data also appears to reflect outreach efforts. In The Big Read's first cycle, African-Americans and Hispanics were under-represented, compared to the population as a whole. In P1C2 there was a marked increase in Hispanics participating in the program (from 2.9% to 13.4%). In P2C1, there was a large increase in participation by African Americans, from 7.5% to 19.0%.

- *Partnering with organizations that serve particular populations may offer a key strategy for reaching audiences and areas not always accommodated by or drawn to arts and literary institutions.* Grantees found that youth groups, Hispanic groups and media outlets, literacy agencies—any organizations devoted to serving particular populations brought not only new constituencies but also proven outreach strategies, venues, and programming ideas. Grantees also sought out partners in or with outreach to correctional institutions, which helped them cross barriers and advance a shared community goal of increasing reading. Data suggest a link between grantees' capacity to reach diverse audiences and the number of partners engaged in the effort.

- *Developing or strengthening existing partnerships with schools, community colleges, and universities is key to youth participation in The Big Read.* Young readers and older students in formal programs of study—whether junior high or graduate school—were more engaged when The Big Read activities were part of a required course. Teens and young adults who had read or were reading the book were more likely to attend an event. Of every four teens and young adults who attended an event, three (76%) had read the book. The likelihood of attending an event (among students in our study) increased by age: 34-35% of those under 18 attended an event; 51-63% of adults aged 19-29; and 75-80% of those over 30. For these older students, participation was more likely to be required.

  These finding may underscore the need to keep schools involved and to encourage two- and four-year colleges to explore ways to actively participate, rather than casually encouraging students to take part. Informal learning activities such as book discussions, companion books, field trips, or museum visits can also provide the structure and stimulus to engage teens and young adults in The Big Read. Holding high-profile events at schools or colleges helps guarantee a student audience and generates interest in Big Read books and events.

  Involvement by art, history, theatre, and music faculties, as well as English teachers, expands school and college participation as well and gives students other ways to connect to Big Read books. School, public, and youth librarians are strong allies in engaging teens and young adults. Events in which students take an active role—performers, exhibitors, discussants—can be highly effective in engaging students in The Big Read and building a bridge between school and community.

- *Positive signs about students' reading habits and interests also suggest how The Big Read might capitalize on both, and attract younger audiences.* Feedback from focus-group students, and from their teachers and librarians, suggest that many teens and young adults are reading for pleasure more than 30 minutes a day and reading a variety of materials that include novels, magazines, and newspapers. Although they read blogs and other online communications, overall, the youth in our study reported they still do most of their reading on paper. The majority of youth in our study—68% of high school students and 78% of college/university students—also said they would like to spend more time reading for pleasure. The major barrier, they say, is time. About a third (32%) said they would read more if they enjoyed it more, and one-fifth said they would read more if they knew what to read.

- *The most successful Big Read events, for audiences of all ages, were family or community events and theatrical events and musical performances.* The celebratory kick-off and finale events, according to grantees, drew big crowds, as did cross-cultural events, which often had a festival atmosphere. Theatrical and musical events that made books come alive were also popular and well-attended, as were events billed as teen-and-parent, younger children-and-parent, and events intended to unite town and gown. Because The Big Read was localized, it was able to bring together many sectors of the community and the organizers also looked to appeal to a variety of interests, all in the service of the specific community book.

- *Exhibits that connected audiences to historical periods, along with appearances by authors, scholars, biographers, and well-known figures or experts on issues, deepened the public conversation about literature.* That The Big Read generated an interest in the themes, issues, and historical periods portrayed in the novels is confirmed by grantees and by a large majority of survey respondents who said participation deepened their understanding and made them want to learn more about issues, periods, and local connections to them. Among the non-school events that attracted students were those that engaged them in thought-provoking discussions of controversial issues—censorship, alienation, immigration issues—or immersed them in arts and culture. One grantee noted that it was often these events that made The Big Read not just about "engaging communities in literate pursuits" but "engaging minds and hearts."

- *Book discussions drew mixed reviews along with recommendations for making them more inviting.* Although book discussions attracting regular book club members were successful, lower attendance from younger audiences and reluctant readers led grantees to rethink and relocate book discussions, opening discussions up to more diverse groups. Some grantees linked student audiences via online discussions. Others made book discussions less formal by relocating to coffee houses or other creative venues and encouraging impromptu book clubs.

- *Very young readers received appropriate support and encouragement in many Big Read sites.* Big Read grantees incorporated Big Reads for Little Readers, adopting companion texts

by theme (e.g., *Out of the Dust* by Karen Hesse for the Big Read selection *Grapes of Wrath*) or author (e.g., Amy Tan's *Sagwa The Chinese, Vietnamese Cat*; Rudolfo Anaya's children's books). art sessions at the museum drew good audiences. These reads leveraged partnerships with schools and children's literacy programs, drew in wide audiences for children's programming, and gave The Big Read a family focus. Several children's Big Read activities also effectively drew parents, and some sites took advantage of this by having free books and lists of upcoming events on hand.

- *Putting books in the hands of citizens, including students and teachers, continues to be an effective distribution and promotional strategy and a gesture that builds goodwill as well as readership.* Grantees in each cycle told stories of the excitement over book and reading kit give-aways. Many also reported that providing classrooms with free copies of the book generated excitement and was instrumental in getting school participation. In some cases the need for classroom sets of books was great, and grantees have promised that books purchased and returned as part of read-and-release programs would be donated to classrooms.

- *Big Read materials have been invaluable instructional and promotional tools for grantees.* Grantees have consistently praised the content and production quality of Teacher's Guides, Reader's Guides, and Audio Guides. Having materials in hand helped grantees enlist partners, playing an especially important role in interesting schools, libraries, and colleges. With school budgets increasingly tight, grantees found that having lesson plans readily available made teachers more apt to join the venture. Grantees also used and praised the public service announcements; anecdotal data suggest that shortened versions offer more flexibility.

Other Benefits

- *The Big Read increased the visibility of participating institutions—and their programs and efforts in the arts and literature—in the media and among city officials, peers, and schools.* Across cycles and institutions, the prestige of an NEA grant and month-long programming raised public profiles, showcased the efforts of librarians—including youth librarians—curators, and university outreach personnel, and built organizational skills, confidence, and résumés for future local and national initiatives. Almost all, or 97% of the grantee survey respondents agreed that library visibility had increased as a result of The Big Read; over three-fourths (79%) said that participation increased their skills in planning and executing events; three-fourths (74%) said The Big Read increased their skills in advertising and promoting events; 86% said The Big Read increased their skills in taking part in national initiatives.

- *Libraries continue to play a pivotal role in The Big Read, as grantees, partners, trainers, publicists—and as places where citizens attend events and get books to keep as well as borrow*. Feedback consistently affirms the key role libraries play in The Big Read. Libraries

have received approximately half of the grantees awarded, and have often served as partners, bringing the total of libraries participating in The Big Read's first three cycles to almost 3,000. Libraries have been instrumental in getting the word out, confirmed by the fact that a majority of participants said they heard The Big Read from a library. For museums, arts institutions, or civic and service groups receiving grants, library partners have complemented their programming and outreach, especially for younger audiences.

- *The Big Read's appeal to grantees and partners from organizations other than libraries and arts institutions points to broad-based interest in literary reading and new approaches to promoting it.* In addition to libraries and arts organizations, Big Read grants have gone to museums, colleges, cities, service and health organizations—all of which have been partners, too, along with other nonprofits and businesses. This suggests that interest in expanding audiences for literary reading goes well beyond institutions historically focused on reading and the arts.

  Data confirm that this interest can translate into innovative programming and promotional strategies, such as Big Read advertising on buses, scout merit badges, and book-themed performances at medical facilities. Partnerships with institutions championing the performing or visual arts were perceived as highly successful because music, theatre, and visual arts provided effective and varied ways to engage readers and non-readers alike in literature. Libraries or consortia that serve rural and often widespread areas see The Big Read as a way to pool and leverage resources to expand awareness and access.

- *Big Read partnerships laid the foundation for future collaborations linking literary pursuits to arts, literacy, and community development goals.* Almost all grantees say that The Big Read increased their capacity not only in forming but also in sustaining coalitions: 99% agreed that The Big Read laid the groundwork for partnerships to boost interest in literature; almost two-thirds strongly agreed; 89% cited an increase in their organization's awareness of organizations with which they might collaborate, and half saw the increase as substantial. The benefits between literary and arts organizations were often mutual: The Big Read laid the groundwork for partnerships to boost interest in literature—and to advance the arts through literature. Some communities merged literary and literacy efforts, seeing both as key to community and economic development.

- *Encouragement and ideas from the national level, and more strategic local efforts, have improved partnerships with schools.* Some grantees experienced challenges involving schools, especially early in the program, but advice on partnering with schools, efforts to engage them earlier in the process, and strategies for working with teachers and students appear to have broken down barriers. Overall, grantees report success with teachers and students participating as a class; success rates with college or university students and faculties

are somewhat lower, but many grantees report productive partnerships. Partnering with schools provides a sort of compound interest, adding not only school-age audiences but also promoting the program and grantee organizations to school peers, colleagues, and families.

Recommendations

From the Evaluation Team

- Continue to promote The Big Read to a wide spectrum of organizations, and encourage those who win grants to be creative and strategic in enlisting local partners, recruiting organizations with proven outreach strategies with targeted constituencies, venues or activities where those audiences gather, or staff experienced in working with them.

- Suggest to grantees that, as they design and staff events, they seek out people in the community who can connect with new audiences. For example, retired teachers have been successful in forming relationships with students in alternative schools or settings, adding a personal touch to book clubs for youth. Some sites have found that teachers or professors who have previously taught in prisons or worked with incarcerated juveniles are skilled at leading discussion groups.

- In addition to being creative in seeking partners, grantees should also be encouraged to share and draw on past experiences (provided through mentorships, forums, or collected lessons learned—see below). Our data indicate that grantees, regardless of population size, need 9-14 core partners; data also suggest that sites with seven or more partners rated levels of success or increases in capacity to reach diverse audiences higher. Grantees have stressed the importance of finding the right contacts to work with schools and bookstores, making sure that partners follow through or contribute equally, and confirming that "missions merge" and The Big Read "attaches to the organization in a long-term, meaningful way." Some grantees found that too many partners led to operational conflicts and more need to monitor resources.

- Encourage grantees to debrief with their major stakeholders and partners at the conclusion of their Big Reads to gather feedback for subsequent partnerships or initiatives. By sharing the ownership and encouraging more ideas based on one experience, a sustainable relationship will more easily emerge the next time.

- The NEA should continue to support grantees by doing things they lack the resources or experience to do, or that could be done more efficiently at the national rather than local level. These include choosing titles or finding sources for translations and large-print books, acquiring rights and permissions, arranging bulk book buys, and creating a speakers bureau.

- The NEA should continue to encourage grantees to take events out into the community, promote book clubs among non-traditional groups, and redefine traditional notions of book

discussions. Existing teen book clubs at libraries and schools—including alternative schools—offer ready-made audiences. Some grantees found that making book discussions less formal or stuffy increased their appeal, and that promoting discussions in ethnic neighborhoods, cafés, coffee shops, teen hang-outs, or anywhere affinity groups gather, increased attendance or the likelihood that spontaneous book discussions would emerge. The model is similar to the science cafés that emerge in bars and coffee houses but, by necessity, have to be planful since the discussion is about a book that those present have read.

- If grantees can't draw on the views of library teen advisory board, suggest they create one, possibly through a Young Adult or school librarian. Ask teens how The Big Read can include youth, and incorporate their ideas for marketing to youth. Other youth organizers can recommend community service projects, merit badges, or non-English class projects, such as art projects or math surveys on reading habits, to engage teens and young adults.

- The body of the report includes other ways to engage teens, stressing the importance of offering thought-provoking discussions and incorporating The Big Read into existing popular events such as poetry slams. Students have enjoyed performing and hands-on activities, and grantees have had success in engaging students in art, music, theatre, or dance workshops around the novels that result in displays, exhibits, or performances for the community.

- Both older students and adults seem to connect with authors, scholars, and well-known figures, and be flattered by their visit (or teleconference) to the community. Encourage communities to use schools as venues. Some sites have used a genre-based approach, selecting a young adult novel or author within the same genre to introduce teens to The Big Read novel. Students and adults alike also seem to enjoy engaging in controversial issues like censorship in contemporary and participatory ways. Censorship is an issue many age groups find interesting, and discussions of previously censored books have been a mainstay of *Fahrenheit 451* implementations.

- Take advantage of new and available technologies for linking students and engaging them in creative projects or events, and draw on the experience of grantees who have used technology and digital literacies effectively. Some sites have created their own blogs for partners, grantees, or participants in other sites reading the same book. One grantee suggested a MySpace or Facebook presence for teens, more condensed programming, more special events, or ways to offer titles in an NEA-sponsored "Net Library" of downloadable books. Some grantees have used distance learning technology to link schools and students in non-traditional settings through online classes, teleconferences, or online teen forums and book discussions. These have been effective in tying rural communities together, linking middle and high school or high school and college students, or prison and juvenile detention center populations. In one site, high school students worked with adult teaching artists and a graphic

designer to remix the text of *To Kill a Mockingbird* by treating words as images to convey the emotion and moral of the story.

- One grantee suggested "empowering kids" by giving them mini grants—to, for example, design their own web-based book club.

- Compile (again, through a forum or mentorship) tips and best practices for managing an implementation. Some grantees, especially those in rural and small town communities, are still surprised by the time and energy a Big Read requires. Some concluded that, for future grants, they would delegate more or use a train-the-trainer model. Some suggested getting "a strong team in place, then finding someone to manage the details." Others will scale down events to a more manageable number, secure expertise for specific details—and find someone retired or otherwise freed up to run the project. Promotion seemed to be a particular challenge for grantees without prior experience or volunteers willing to take on the tasks.

- Continue to streamline the paperwork and reporting process. It may be that, as the project matures, differential management and reporting structures can be instituted. As noted in the body of the report, the service area of grantees varies considerably: some grants go to statewide humanities councils or centers, some involve collaboratives, some regional networks or branch libraries—and gathering meaningful attendance figures is not only challenging, but may not generate comparable data.

- Consider allowing a multi-year proposal/grant for agencies with previous grants and proven success. Some grantees now see The Big Read as a part of their annual calendar and services to the community. While they have been successful in writing winning proposals, partnering with local agencies, promoting and hosting programs, and filing final reports, they see value in focusing their time, staff, and energies on the two middle activities rather than the first and last. If this is feasible, perhaps an interim reporting process, with benchmarks and progress toward them, could take the place of formal proposals and full reports for each cycle.

(See also p. 138 for recommendations for engaging schools and school-age audiences.)

From Grantees

- Encourage communities writing a Big Read grant to integrate the arts more deliberately. Consider recommending that the Big Read require applicants to have "a partnership with an arts organization or the arts department of an educational institution," as a way to engage a wider audience; e.g., "with art, visuals, and audio that you can play, dramatizing the story brings it to life for people who are intimidated by it."

- Start early and be persistent in contacting community partners. Get community partners

involved in the planning stages, and show them how they will benefit from the project, either through exposure, attendance at their location, or financial compensation.

- Pitch events/programs to a variety of media partners. Look for promotion opportunities from unexpected partners and supporters. Use media to keep the program in the public's eye, promote early and often—and don't be afraid to spend on promotion.

- Assign or make available a list of mentors/grant partners for new grantees (from a list of willing repeat or form grantee organizations). These could link grantees from the same type of institution, those serving similar populations or geographic areas or those reading the same book. A few grantees note that even though Arts Midwest is extremely helpful and responsive, having a friend in the field could also be beneficial; some noted that they don't want to call Arts Midwest with every small question, which sometimes go unanswered. This could be accomplished in part through an online forum. If not prohibitively expensive, expand opportunities for new and veteran grantees to share ideas at Orientation.

- Put together a kind of "cheat sheet," which lists what other communities have done with individual books. This could include tips about working with publisher on specific or general matters, such as gaining permission for public reading of excerpts, along with a list of contacts, speakers, and programming ideas.

- At the local and national levels, create mechanisms for sharing best practices, along the way or as month-long programs or cycles are completed. Locally, this was important for partnerships made up of very different organizations or those separated by greater distances, who had individual programming schedules. A few sites plan to have a blog that they will contribute to daily to share successful techniques for the benefit of all partners.

Recommendations for Evaluation

- Involve the evaluation team earlier in the program. An earlier start would have allowed Rockman to learn more from grantees about the kind of data they could provide. Earlier involvement could also have removed any redundancies in data collection and created a more seamless connection between the Arts Midwest data and the independent evaluation data, helping Rockman see how the two data sets could best complement one another.

- Clarify the role of the evaluation team to the grantees. During site visits or calls arranging them, it was clear that grantees didn't always understand who Rockman was, why a national evaluation was being conducted, and how the survey data was connected to the other reporting requirements. The teleconference helped in Cycle 2, but coming well into the first

cycle, it was too late for some. Once grantees learned more about the evaluation, they were eager to see how their feedback or results compared to that from other sites or to a national picture of Big Read implementation.

- The year-long schedule now in place would have made the evaluation easier. The shorter cycles came fast upon one another, making it difficult to collect and analyze data and absorb the findings or propose mid-course changes before the process started all over again. The schedule allowed us to collect sufficient data to provide formative feedback that we were fairly confident in, but not quite enough time to really understand impact and how best to measure it. If future programs or evaluations require a compressed calendar, it may be useful to stagger implementation and impact studies or distinguish more clearly between formative and summative goals.

- If the NEA sees a need in future projects to create a relational database to track and link data sets, it would be especially important to set the system up early in the project and create protocols and web-based forms, similar to the eGrants system, where grantees could not only report and upload data but also generate their own reports. Grantees are proud to be part of a national initiative, and, again, eager to know how their figures compare to other sites. Being able to access comparison data can help sustain interest, guide local improvement, and build local capacity for evaluation. REA included something like this in its proposal, along with training and technical assistance for grantees entering data. This still may be a challenge because organizations track things differently and have varying capacity to provide data, but it would make it possible to conduct analyses, like the data envelopment analysis described in the methodology section below, at the end of the project.

Part Seven

METHODOLOGY

This study explored the implementation and impact of The Big Read in 315 communities hosting programs from January 2007 through June 2008. Findings are based on survey responses from grantees and participants, case studies conducted with a sample of sites, and proposals and final reports submitted to Arts Midwest by grantees. The discussion below describes the design, administration, and response rates for instruments; site selection and data collection for the case studies; and quantitative and qualitative data analyses performed within and across data sets.

The discussion also describes the challenges presented by the study, due largely to the unique character of a Big Read implementation: grantees include small-town, mid-sized, and big-city libraries; museums, community foundations, and health organizations; and cities, groups of cities, regional library consortia, and statewide humanities councils. The programming is diverse and often tied to local histories, interests, and talents. Population sizes range from 1,500 to over eight million per community. Though grantees estimate the numbers of citizens they thought they would reach and the numbers they think they did reach, attendance figures are inevitably approximations, and the most ardent attendees are likely counted more than once. In research terms, the study involved 315 different treatments, with an indeterminate number of participants only occasionally gathered as a captive audience, and all data were self-reported. Size and staffing differences among grantees, and events that ranged from small book discussions to big outdoor events, posed additional challenges to gathering accurate, uniform data. These challenges, in turn, prompted concerns about the representativeness of the responses and the generalizability of the findings.

To address these issues, we used a mixed-methods research design with multiple data collection tools, and augmented quantitative data with qualitative data that provided a more in-depth look at implementation. (See Research Design Matrix, p. 164.) Where possible we also linked data and triangulated responses by assigning a unique site ID code to each of the post cards, event cards, participant and grantee surveys, and final reports submitted to Arts Midwest.

Survey Methods

Instruments

Grantee Online Survey. After their Big Reads ended, we asked grantees in all three cycles to complete a survey about their success in reaching audiences, use of Big Read resources, effectiveness of programming, and organizational capacity built as a result of the program.

Event and Post Cards (Phase 1 only). In the first two cycles, grantees were asked to distribute 500 event cards and 250 pre-paid postcards, both containing items designed to gather demographic and reading habit data from participants and to recruit respondents for the participant survey and follow-up survey.

Participant Survey. Administered in all three cycles, this survey was the main tool for getting uniform demographic and participation data from participants. It included items about reading habits, some from the SPPA and some directly related to The Big Read. It was available online in the first two cycles, and online and on paper in the third.

Participant Follow-up Survey. Three months after their Big Read, participants in all cycles who provided contact information were invited to take, an online or phone follow-up survey that examined changes in reading interests and habits and attempted to gauge the longer-term impact of the project; this survey also repeated the SPPA items included in the participant survey.

Student Reading Checklist. To learn more about teens' and young adults' participation in The Big Read and reading habits, we asked those participating in Phase 2, Cycle 1 focus groups to complete a checklist that asked about reading-related activities during and after The Big Read.

Instrument Development and Administration

We developed all instruments in collaboration with the NEA's Office of Research and Analysis, which advised on individual items and areas of focus and then distributed drafts to the NEA's Big Read team, IMLS, and Arts Midwest for further review. Surveys included forced-choice and open-ended items, which in some cases were repeated on case-study protocols. During Phase 1, Cycle 1, we piloted the participant survey on paper and online with library patrons at a site that had an early implementation.[26] Patrons provided feedback on clarity, readability, and appropriateness of items for different audiences. Prior to formal case studies and online survey administration, we piloted grantee survey items and grantee and participant interview protocol questions in three sites with early programs.[27] In developing the student checklist administered in Cycle 3, we consulted similar surveys and available research on student reading habits. Instruments, data collection plans, and estimates of burdens on respondents were included in the OMB submission requesting their approval of the survey instruments.

[26] Vigo County Public Library, Terre Haute, IN.

[27] Vigo County Public Library, Terre Haute, IN; The National Steinbeck Center, Salinas, CA; and The Montalvo Arts Center, Redwood City, CA.

Grantee and participant surveys were made available online in all three cycles. The Big Read web site included a prominent link to the participant survey, and grantees were also encouraged to provide a link to the survey on their local web sites. The participant survey and the event postcards were available in Spanish as well as English. Drop-down menus made it easier for respondents to answer questions about site locations and book titles. Although libraries and other grantee institutions were encouraged to provide computer and online access, a respondent sample in the first two cycles that skewed to well-educated participants suggested that a lack of access might be excluding some participants. In Phase 2, Cycle 1, we therefore made surveys available on paper and online. This contributed to higher response rates in this cycle.

Arts Midwest emailed grantees, inviting them to take the online survey (linked in the email) after completing their programs, and (at our request) sent follow-up reminders to improve response rates. In Phase 1, participants providing email addresses on event and post cards were invited to take a participant survey by phone or online; grantees also encouraged participants to log on and complete surveys. In Phase 2, paper surveys were distributed at Big Read events. Participants providing email addresses were again invited, via email, to take the three-month follow-up survey. Student Checklists were distributed to all students taking part in Phase 2 focus groups.

Response Rates and Sample Sizes and Composition

Although completed participant cards and surveys offered an adequate representation of most states and of Big Read sites, there was, as reported in individual parts of this report, wide variation in the returns per site. There were also disproportionate return rates by cycle: we had far fewer grantee survey respondents in Phase 2, Cycle 1, perhaps because the evaluation was focused on teens and young adults and this cycle did not include cards, a teleconference for grantees, or break-out sessions at the orientation. We also had larger numbers of participant survey respondents in Cycle 3, most likely due to two factors: for the first time we sent paper surveys to grantees rather than relying on online submissions, and we did not send them post cards or event cards, so the participant surveys were their only data collection obligation and tool. Tables 71-73 show response figures and ranges per site and cycle.

Table 71. Grantee Survey Response Distribution, Overall and by Cycle

	Number of Respondents	Percent of Respondent Group	Number of Sites Represented	Percent of Sites	Range in Responses per site
P1C1	72	27.3%	52	72.2%	1-7
P1C2	184	57.2%	91	77.8%	1-12
P2C1	41	15.5%	37	29.4%	1-2
Overall Number	297	100.0%	180	57.1%*	1-12

*Percent of 315 sites represented in overall grantee survey sample

Table 72. Participant Responses by Cycle and Instrument

	Post-cards	Sites Represented	Event Cards	Sites Represented	Participant Survey	Sites Represented	Participant Follow-up survey	Sites Represented
P1C1	998	59 (81.9%)	3.570	35 (48.6%)	732	62 (86.1%)	283 (37.8%)	50 (69.4%)
P1C2	2,338	111 (94.9%)	6.954	86 (73.5%)	568	103 (88.0%)	333 (44.5%)	78 (66.7%)
P2C1	NA	NA	NA	NA	2,336	99 (78.6%)	133 (17.8%)	33 (26.2%)
TOTAL	3,336	170 (89.9%)*	10,524	121 (64.0%)*	3,636	264 (83.8%)**	755	161* (51.1%)**

*6 respondents did not identify sites.
*Number, percent of 189 sites receiving cards
**Number, percent of all 315 sites

Table 73. Range in Participant Responses per Site

Cycle	Postcards	Event Cards	Participant Survey	Participant Follow-up survey
P1C1	1-80	1-419	1-78	1-32
P1C2	1-92	1-553	1-70	1-29
P2C1	NA	NA	1-137	1-14

As noted in the body of this report, early findings indicated that the participant sample skewed to avid, older readers who were white, well-educated, and by a margin of three to one, female. That this was a fairly accurate profile of Big Read participants was reflected in feedback from grantees, who noted that they saw more older females at events, were more successful in drawing regular patrons with a shared demographic profile, and sometimes felt they were preaching to the proverbial choir. These findings inspired the program sponsors to renew efforts to reach more diverse audiences and gather feedback from them in P1C2 and P2C1.

Although their efforts may not have resulted in a manifestly diverse audience profile, grantees reported that they employed new outreach strategies and distributed cards and surveys to a range of participants, including the “new faces” they saw at events. In survey responses and interviews, grantees themselves reported moderate success in reaching diverse audiences, also noting that they could report only what they could see—gender, approximate age, predominate ethnicity; whether participants were avid or reluctant readers was not readily apparent.

A final challenge was collecting sufficient data on key elements to allow for some of the more complex analyses. In some cases, lopsided response rates and missing data in reports to Arts Midwest (for example, zero values for in-kind dollars, or missing numbers of event attendees) hampered our ability to see how certain inputs affected outcomes. As noted earlier in the report, starting the study after some Phase 1, Cycle 1 programs were over and ending it before all Phase 2, Cycle 1 data were in also affected our analysis.

Case Study Methods *(See Table 74 on p. 160 for complete list of case studies)*

Site Selection and Data Collection, Phase 1 (N=23)

At the NEA's and Arts Midwest's suggestion, we relied in part on volunteers for our P1C1 and P1C2 case study sites. We invited other sites to participate to include more titles and add more geographic and demographic range. For example, in P1C1, we added a regional library system and literary center in the Northwest, an urban site in the South, and a museum in the Northeast; in P1C2, we invited an urban theater group in the West and a community college in the Midwest to participate. In the first cycle, we also conducted retrospective interviews with sites with Big Reads that ended before the evaluation began.

During site visits to 15 Phase 1 communities, we attended as many Big Read events as possible, convened groups of eight to ten participants willing to talk more about the events and Big Read experiences, and interviewed grantees and community partners, using structured interview protocols. Two to three months after their Big Reads, we conducted phone interviews with case study grantees and appropriate partners to discuss longer-term changes in patronage, circulation, literature-related events, and partnerships.

Site Selection and Data Collection, Phase 2 (N=13)

During the first cycle of Phase 2, our case studies focused on teenagers' and young adults' participation in The Big Read. Sites and participants were purposively selected based on targeted audiences, partnerships, size and geographic location, title, and programming dates. Focus group participants included teens and young adults in middle and high schools, alternative schools colleges and universities, juvenile centers, Teen Advocacy groups, and home-school programs (see Part Five, p. 112). From March through May 2008, evaluators spent two to three days in eight sites, attending Big Read events, visiting classrooms, and conducting focus groups with teens and young adults. (Parental consent forms were provided for public school students.) We also conducted telephone interviews, including one telephone student focus group, with five additional sites. Below are other factors that led to case study selections, followed by a brief description of the eight sites visited during P2C1.

- During screening calls and reviews of programming and proposed partnerships, we found that prior experience helped communities build solid partnerships with schools, form a broader range of partnerships, and gauge what programming might attract teen and young adult audiences—all of which gave us a broader range of events and venues to work around and made it easier to schedule focus groups in schools. We knew from our first and second rounds of case studies, survey data, and final report narratives that school involvement was sometimes more challenging than anticipated, and we wanted to make sure that we would have students/schools in our focus groups who actively participated in the program.

- That said, we also did not want to miss the opportunity to learn how effective some of the first-time Big Read sites were in reaching teen and young adult audiences with some unique programming. For example, Waukee Public Library (IA) linked reading *The Shawl* with social studies classes' units on the Holocaust; the UMass Memorial Health Care targeted teen parents in GED classes as part of their events around *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter*; the Peninsula Players (WI) used distance learning centers to engage students in *The Grapes of Wrath*. Post-program interviews allowed us to gather feedback on the impact of their efforts.

- Two of the visit sites were previous case study sites. These give us an opportunity to talk with grantees in some depth about how the first Big Read cycle compared to the second, what they've learned about reaching or including teen and young adult audiences, and what impact they think The Big Read has on these groups' reading habits and attitudes. Having had previous contact with these grantees also made it much easier to explain our goals and arrange case-study activities.

- We selected sites that included cultural and economic diversity, within and across sites, and students at different reading levels. We also looked for activities designed to tap related but not necessarily reading interests—theater, music, writing, radio; for activities outside literary or arts interests—e.g., related to migrant or immigration issues, dream interpretation, or detective work—and for organizations or partners with some experience designing programming for youths.

- We also tried to include a range of grantees types—public libraries, mutli-branch library systems, literary and arts centers, a multi-county reading initiative; our interview group also includes a Boy Scout Council and a health care center. We did not have a university grantee on the list, but several participated as partners, thus our focus groups included community college and university students.

- Because we wanted ample time to refine instruments and review plans with the Office of Research and Analysis, we did not include in our visit group any sites that had early (January through early March) programs. We included these in interviews where possible.

(NOTE: the activities described below focus mainly on Big Read participants; in each site, we also included non-participants.)

1. **Aspen Writers' Foundation (CO):** This 32-year old literary organization has a history of engaging students in the very diverse Roaring Fork Valley in reading and literary activities. The Big Read is targeted to culturally and economically diverse high schools students, with whom we'll conduct focus groups—those from migrant families as well as those from Aspen; students taking part in Writers-in-Schools programs and author visits (Urrea and Chavez);

students attending a theatrical adaptation, not necessarily as part of a class; and students in Colorado Mountain College course for ELLs/first-time readers.

2. **County of Los Angeles Public Library (CA):** This large, urban library, which has previous Big Read experience, offers extensive outreach to schools and teen and young adult audiences. East LA has the highest percentage of its population being Hispanic in the U.S., and The Big Read is an opportunity to being the unincorporated East L community together, from the high schools to the university to Juvenile Hall residents. We plan to conduct focus groups with a wide range of students—Cal State University students performing in a theatrical adaptation of *Bless Me, Ultima*; Cal State students involved in teaching the book as part of a service learning project; high school students, including those in largely Hispanic, disadvantaged neighborhoods; students serving on the library's Teen Advisory Board.

3. **Cumberland County Public Library (NC):** This seven-library system built, as part of a 2007 Big Read, strong relationships with schools, museum partners, local universities, and military base libraries. Our focus groups and data collection will include students in three participating high schools; students involved in a branch library's active youth program, but not participating as part of a class; students attending two universities; and, we hope, spouses and enlistees, or those involved in the Family Readiness Center, on the bases. We also hope to assemble focus groups in connection with events (outside of school), such as author and scholar visits (Orson Scott Card; professors from UNC speaking on book burning in Nazi Germany, and on "Manly Books for Manly Men").

4. **National Steinbeck Center (CA):** The National Steinbeck Center has never presented a major public program on the work of an author other than John Steinbeck. *Fahrenheit 451*, and events about the importance of books to society, gives them a chance to partner with groups they formed relationships with in a Cycle 1 program and extend their role as a literary center for the community. We will conduct focus groups with students at Cal State Monterrey Bay and at least one local high school, and possibly with high school students who took advantage of buses to events at CSUMB.

5. **Hartford Public Library (CT):** Building on a previous Big Read, Hartford will engage students in poetry slam events and writing workshops. We will conduct focus groups with some of these students, and with students who attended (some voluntarily and some for class) activities sponsored by library Teen Services. We will also hold focus groups with students at a magnet school, with those in a lower-level reading class; and with older students at Manchester Community College.

6. **Muncie Public Library (IN).** Muncie has experience from a Cycle 1 Big Read, and is one of the few communities reading *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*. We will conduct focus groups with

two schools reading the book (and holding online discussions with a partner school in Russia), one of which is an AP class; and possibly with students who created projects linked to Tolstoy and *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*. We will also hold a focus groups with youths not necessarily participating in The Big Read, who frequent activities at The Loft, a teen hang out at one of the branch city libraries that designs events to keep teens reading and appeal to teen interests.

7. **Performing Arts Society of Acadiana (LA):** This first-time Big Read site is using the performing arts and a multidisciplinary, multicultural approach to engage and interest teens and young adults in *Their Eyes Were Watching God* and the Harlem Renaissance. We will conduct focus groups at a local university incorporating The Big Read in English *and* Visual Arts classes, and at two culturally and economically diverse parish high schools, and at a range of events and venues—which could include talking to students taking part in or attending an original play about Hurston and other Harlem Renaissance artists, those involved in musical compositions and in a high school radio station, those attending events featuring Zydeco, Cajun, and Creole music and an African Diaspora festival, those involved in a panel discussion pairing high school and college students.

8. **Together We Read (NC):** This organization, which held a successful Cycle 1 Big Read program, serves 21 counties. We will hold focus groups with classes in two schools that altered their curriculum to include *My Ántonia*, students at a junior college, and students involved in media broadcasts. We also hope to conduct focus groups with non-school activities, in connection with events that could include author visits, talks about immigration, a literary festival, or storytelling events about immigrant experiences. Other opportunities include events involving writers, and activities linking reading and writing for students.

Table 74. The Big Read Case Studies P1C1, P1C2, and P2C1

	Site	Book	Pop. Size	Geog. Region	✓ = sites visited; ☎= interviewed by phone
Phase 1, Cycle 1	Harris Co. Libraries, Houston, TX	*The Joy Luck Club*	L	S	✓
	City of Bridgeport, Bridgeport, CT	*To Kill a Mockingbird*	L	NE	✓
	Timberland Regional Library, Tumwater, WA	*My Ántonia*	M	NW	✓
	Cumberland Co. Library, Fayetteville, NC	*Their Eyes Were Watching God*	M	SE	✓
	National Steinbeck Center, Salinas, CA	*The Grapes of Wrath*	M	W	✓
	The Cabin, Boise, ID	*A Farewell to Arms*	M	W	✓
	Mattatuck Museum, Waterbury, CT	*To Kill a Mockingbird*	M	NE	✓
	Montalvo Arts Center, Redwood City, CA	*Fahrenheit 451*	M	W	✓
	Vigo Co. Library, Terre Haute, IN	*The Great Gatsby*	M	M	✓
	Bloomington Area Arts Council, Bloomington, IN	*Fahrenheit 451*	M	M	✓
	Washington Univ., St. Louis, MO	*Their Eyes Were Watching God*	L	M	☎
	Newport News Public Library System, Newport News, VA	*Their Eyes Were Watching God*	M	S	☎
	Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians, Harbor Springs, MI	*To Kill a Mockingbird*	M	M	☎
	Peoria Public Library, Peoria, IL	*To Kill a Mockingbird*	M	M	☎
Phase 1, Cycle 2	Caldwell Public Library, Caldwell, NJ	*The Age of Innocence*	M	NE	✓
	Spoon River College, Canton, IL	*To Kill a Mockingbird*	S	M	✓
	Hometown Perry Iowa, Perry, IA	*The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter*	S	M	✓
	Berkeley Public Library, Berkeley, CA	*Their Eyes Were Watching God*	M	W	✓
	Will & Company, Los Angeles, CA	*The Grapes of Wrath*	L	W	✓
	Writers & Books, Rochester, NY	*The Maltese Falcon*	L	NE	☎
	Research Foundation of SUNY, New Palz, NY	*Bless Me, Ultima*	M	NE	☎
	Ironwood Carnegie Library, Ironwood, MI	*The Grapes of Wrath*	S	M	☎
	Pinellas, Clearwater, FL	*The Great Gatsby*	M	S	☎
Phase 2, Cycle 1	County of Los Angeles Public Library, Los Angeles, CA	*Bless Me, Ultima*	L	W	✓
	Aspen Writers' Foundation, Aspen, CO	*Bless Me, Ultima*	M	W	✓
	National Steinbeck Center, Salinas, CA	*Fahrenheit 451*	M	W	✓
	Cumberland Co., Public Library, Fayetteville, NC	*Fahrenheit 451*	M	SE	✓
	Together We Read, Asheville, NC	*My Ántonia*	L	SE	✓
	Hartford Public Library, Hartford, CT	*The Maltese Falcon*	L	NE	✓
	Performing Arts Society of Acadiana, Inc., Lafayette, LA	*Their Eyes Were Watching God*	M	S	✓
	Muncie Public Library, Muncie, IN	*The Death of Ivan Ilych*	M	M	✓
	Waukee Public Library, Waukee, IA	*The Shawl*	S	M	Phone interview/ focus group, 4 students & teacher
	The Jamestown Fine Arts Assoc., Jamestown, ND	*A Farewell to Arms*	S	NW	☎
	Peninsula Players Theatre Foundation, Fish Creek, WI	*The Grapes of Wrath*	S	M	☎
	UMass Memorial Health Care, Worcester, MA	*The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter*	M	NE	☎
	Libraries of Eastern Oregon, Fossil, OR	*The Joy Luck Club*	M	NW	☎

Small (S) = <25,000; Medium (M) = 25,000-99,000; Large (L) = 99,000+

Data Management and Analysis

The data collected and analyzed for The Big Read were numerous and varied. We collected data across three cycles from grantee organizations and participants, using four different tools for the latter group. Not only were data collected for these individual groups, but the data sets also were linked to allow for nested analysis across groups and tools. This linkage was accomplished by assigning a site ID (based on Arts Midwest's applicant number) that reflected both the unique grant recipient and the phase and cycle of the grant award. Assigning codes was relatively easy with online surveys, for which sites in the drop-down menu were linked to a unique ID in the HTML code. Code assignment was far more difficult with event cards and especially postcards because participants traveled from other towns to attend events (but listed their hometowns), mailed postcards from zip codes different from grantee zip codes, and returned instruments without clear identification. Overall, the processing of these data *before* any analysis was performed required over 3,300 lines of code produced on a standard statistical software package. The following tables and discussion detail the data sets used and the process involved in compiling and analyzing their contents.

Table 75. Data Sets Used in Analysis

Characteristic	Arts Midwest Grantee Data	Grantee Survey	Participant Survey	Participant Follow-up Survey	Event and Postcards
Number of observations	315	302	3,636	755	13,860
Variables	104	131	126	49	47
Phases	2	2	2	2	2
Number of Cycles in use	3	3	3	3	2
Common site IDs included	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Instrument format	Excel spreadsheet, proposals & eGrant submissions with data	Online survey	Online and paper instrument	Online survey	Paper instruments

Quantitative Analyses

We created demographic and participation profiles and reported frequencies and means for survey responses using standard descriptives and analysis of variance and chi-square analysis to understand any difference among group analyses. As noted above, the participant surveys contained a subset of SPPA items that formed the basis of the *Reading at Risk* report. We compared the demographics of our participants to the SPPA respondents and conducted comparative analyses of our participants' responses to the SPPA items embedded in our surveys and those from the SPPA survey population.

We also performed a series of analyses, where adequate data were available, to explore the relationships between grantee attributes and program outcomes and establish some objective measure of success. For example, we used a chi-square test to assess whether the number of partner organizations had an impact on grantees' perceptions of The Big Read's success in serving the surrounding community. That is, we tested the null hypothesis that there is no

association between number of partner organizations and grantees' reports of an increase in community variables (B12 series). Because at least 50% of the grantees had at least seven partner organizations, the entire set of grantees (n=294) were divided into two groups: seven or fewer partners and more than seven partner organizations. The grantee responses to the B12 series of questions were then reclassified into a binary response pattern: The Big Read resulting in no change in community services and The Big Read resulting in an increase in community services. The chi-square test statistic showed no association for most categories, but for one category—*"capacity to attract diverse audiences"*—there was a positive association, beyond what would be expected to occur simply by chance, indicating that having more partners was linked to improvements in the grantees' capacity to attract diverse audiences.

Data Envelopment Analysis

As explained in Part Three, we explored various ways to identify implementations that were successful in using program resources to achieve program objectives. One of these was a data envelopment technique that compares the levels of inputs and outputs of each grantee to those from the entire set. These comparisons have the potential to identify best practices, or grantees or implementations that produced a maximum level of output using a minimum level of inputs. Although we concluded that we did not have enough complete data sets for all of the input and output variables to conduct a meaningful analysis, we have suggested how this technique might be used in the future to identify best practices or models of successful implementation.

Qualitative Analyses

We analyzed qualitative data to explore convergent and divergent themes and, for the case studies, to identify different models and styles of implementation. We coded interviews, focus group data, and responses to open-ended questions using a thematic coding approach. In addition, we reviewed documents and artifacts gathered in the field.

Arts Midwest Database—Grantee Counts Spreadsheets and Final Report Data

We received final reports and counts spreadsheets, as well as project narratives, from Arts Midwest as they were submitted by grantees following their Big Reads. The quantitative data were entered into the database, and we reviewed and coded the qualitative data.

Organizations receiving a Big Read grant are required to submit final reports to The Big Read partners. Included in the requirements is a summary of counts—of events, attendance, materials distributed, etc. Another requirement is a financial summary. In addition, grantees are asked to submit a narrative report describing their Big Read in qualitative detail. The template provided by Arts Midwest asks grantees to: provide a synopsis of their program, including highlights and what was successful and unsuccessful; describe the impact on the community, including the impact on reluctant or lapsed readers (revised in 2008 to read "reluctant or lapsed readers" rather than "non-readers"); give examples of productive partnerships; describe how public officials and schools

participated; give examples of successful events and promotion; describe their use of NEA-provided resources; and offer suggestions for prospective grantees and for improvement.

In Phase 1 Cycle 1, we read through the final report narratives to provide the NEA with feedback to inform their decisions about program elements such as Public Service Announcements and levels of participation by schools. For Phase 1 Cycle 2, we conducted a systematic analysis of narrative reports, which helped us interpret survey and quantitative data. Arts Midwest forwarded the P1C2 final narrative reports to us as grantees submitted them (from Fall 2007 through Spring 2008). We imported these into NVivo8, a qualitative data analysis software program. Of the 117 final reports, we coded 64 (55%), oversampling to include a representative sample by region, book, and at least one of each institutional type.

Table 76. Regional Representation in Sample

Census Bureau Regional Divisions	Non-coded (N=52)	Coded sample (N=64)	All reports (N=117)
New England	1.9%	9.2%	6.0%
Middle Atlantic	15.4%	15.4%	15.4%
East North Central	21.2%	21.5%	21.4%
West North Central	5.8%	3.1%	4.3%
South Atlantic	19.2%	15.4%	17.1%
East South Central	5.8%	3.1%	4.3%
West South Central	1.9%	6.2%	4.3%
Mountain	15.4%	13.8%	14.5%
Pacific	13.5%	10.8%	12.0%

Using codes generated from the narrative template, from the research matrix, and from the data (as new themes emerged), we generated a list of 108 codes in the program. We also imported demographic attributes for each grantee, including: region, repeat grantee, institution, grant award, book title, military, population size, and number of events; attendance at events (adult, child, and total); number of book discussions and attendance at book discussions (adult, child, and total); number of partner organizations, libraries, museums, K-12 schools, teachers, educator certificates, and volunteers; distribution numbers for Big Read materials; and number of media impressions. Using the codes and the demographic data as variables, we ran queries of the data to answer our research questions.

Table 77. The Big Read Research Matrix—Map of Constructs and Research Questions to Data Sources and Instruments

CONSTRUCTS		RESEARCH QUESTIONS	INSTRUMENTS AND DATA SOURCES (blue shading, grantee data; yellow, participant data)														
			Cards distributed in Phase 1 only; other data from all sites for P1C1, P1C2, & P2C1 (N=315)							Data from case study sites/three cycles (N=36)							
			Arts Midwest Database	Reviews of Grantee Proposals/Narratives	Grantee Online Survey	Participant Postcards (Ph. 1)	Participant Event Cards (Ph. 1)	Participant Survey	Participant Follow-up Survey	Grantee/Partner Interview	Grantee Follow-up Interview	Program Artifacts	Event Observations	Participant Focus Groups	Student Focus Groups (P2C1)	Student Checklist (P2C1)	
IMPLEMENTATION HOW COMMUNITIES IMPLEMENT THE BIG READ	Site characteristics & Scope of Implementation	What community organizations receive Big Read grants/What is the representation across grantee types (i.e., among libraries, museums, literary centers, community colleges, universities, service organizations, etc.)?	✓	✓													
		Have representation figures or proportions changed (across the three cycles)?	✓	✓													
		What kinds/how many partners take part in Big Reads? How do partnerships vary by grantee type, program size, and experience? How many are new and how many are sustained?	✓	✓	✓												
		What is the range in NEA grants awarded, matching funds, in-kind contributions from partners, etc.?	✓							✓							
		How many/what proportion of grantees have won repeat grants?	✓														
	Partnerships, Promotion, & Resources	What Big Read titles do grantees choose and why? How do themes resonate locally, and what kinds of programming do grantees and partners design around those themes?	✓	✓	✓					✓							
		What kind and how many media events occur in connection with The Big Read? To what extent do communities use NEA-provided PSAs? What kind of media coverage is locally produced?	✓	✓						✓							
		What media coverage or partnerships do grantees and partners find most effective? To what degree are promotion and media coverage associated with public awareness & program participation?			✓					✓							
		To what extent do community grantees and partners use NEA-produced resources? Which prove most useful for organizers and participants?		✓	✓					✓							
		What kinds of materials and resources do grantees themselves produce for their Big Read programs? To what degree are different materials or resources associated with program awareness, participation, or success?			✓					✓		✓					

			Arts Midwest Database	Reviews of Grantee Proposals/Narratives	Grantee Online Survey	Participant Postcards (Ph.1)	Participant Event Cards (Ph. 1)	Participant Survey	Participant Follow-up Survey	Grantee/Partner Interview	Grantee Follow-up Interview	Program Artifacts	Event Observations	Participant Focus Groups	Student Focus Groups (P2C1)	Student Checklist (P2C1)
PARTICIPATION—WHO PARTICIPATES IN THE BIG READ	Participation Profiles & Demographics	Who participates in The Big Read? How does participation vary by demographics (i.e., age, ethnicity, gender), education level, or reading habits?				✓	✓	✓							✓	✓
		How does participation vary by community, book, event type, organization type or locale (rural/urban)?				✓	✓	✓							✓	
		How do participants hear about The Big Read, or what is the point of contact?				✓	✓	✓								
		For what reasons and to what extent do particular audiences—schools, teachers, students, military members, correctional institutions or incarcerated audiences—take part?		✓	✓			✓		✓					✓	
	Participation Trends	Are there trends or patterns of participation—by organization, event type, cycle—and what are they associated with: organization type or prevalence of type, program changes, promotion, or audiences targeted?	✓		✓		✓			✓						
		What events or resources have proven most effective in attracting audiences?		✓		✓		✓		✓			✓		✓	
		What do participation figures and trends indicate about the program's effectiveness in attracting audiences, including new or diverse populations?			✓					✓						
BEST IMPLEMENTATION PRACTICES	Partnerships & Programming	What defines or characterizes successful partnerships? What implementation models or programming strategies have emerged from three cycles?			✓					✓			✓	✓		
		What factors differentiate models of implementation?	✓	✓												
		What hinders a successful Big Read implementation? Are there recurrent or unique challenges based on size, locale, partnerships, etc.?			✓			✓								
	Effective Outreach	What partnerships have proven most effective, strategic, or sustainable? What leadership or management practices are associated with successful implementation?	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓			✓		
		What partnerships, outreach, or programming are associated with a higher volume of participation? Which most successfully attract diverse or new audiences?			✓					✓	✓		✓			

			Arts Midwest Database	Reviews of Grantee Proposals/Narratives	Grantee Online Survey	Participant Postcards (Ph. 1)	Participant Event Cards (Ph. 1)	Participant Survey	Participant Follow-up Survey	Grantee/Partner Interview	Grantee Follow-up Interview	Program Artifacts	Event Observations	Participant Focus Groups	Student Focus Groups (P2C1)	Student Checklist (P2C1)
IMPACT ON COMMUNITIES	Visibility, Capacity, Patronage & Services	To what extent has The Big Read increased the visibility and status of libraries, museums, and partnering institutions?		✓	✓					✓	✓					
		What impact does The Big Read have on how libraries, museums, and other community organizations serve communities build coalitions & partnerships?		✓	✓					✓	✓					
		To what extent does The Big Read cultivate community bonds between organizations that can be leveraged for future initiatives?		✓	✓					✓	✓					
		To what extent do Big Reads result in higher attendance, circulation, and patronage? To what extent do Big Reads bring in new audiences?		✓	✓					✓	✓					
IMPACT ON LITERARY READING & PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE ARTS	Reading Habits & Literary Activities	To what degree does The Big Read expand the audience of literary readers? Do changes vary by age, gender, or ethnicity?		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓
		What do participants, by demographic group, feel they gain from participating? To what extent do participants discuss books beyond events?					✓	✓	✓					✓	✓	
		Do participants seek out or engage in other reading-related activities after The Big Read? To what extent are these behaviors attributable to The Big Read?						✓	✓					✓	✓	✓
		What partnerships or programming are associated with changes in reading behaviors?			✓				✓	✓						✓
		To what extent does The Big Read affect patronage/circulation/attendance sales for participating institutions?			✓		✓			✓	✓					
		How effective is the program in changing attitudes and behaviors related to literary reading? How do effects vary?					✓		✓					✓	✓	✓
		To what extent or in what ways does The Big Read expand participation in arts and cultural activities related to literature?		✓	✓					✓		✓				
	Reading Habits of Teens & Young Adults	How/ to what extent do teens and young adults participate in The Big Read?				✓	✓	✓		✓					✓	✓
		What activities and events most successfully engage teens and young adults?					✓			✓					✓	

		How does school participation affect student involvement in The Big Read?		✓	✓					✓					✓	
		What do teens and young adults have to say about their reading habits and participation or potential participation in The Big Read?													✓	✓
		What might increase literary reading among teens and young adults? What role could libraries and other community organizations, and The Big Read, play?								✓	✓				✓	

APPENDIX A:
INSTRUMENTS

The Big Read Participant Survey

As part of a national study of The Big Read, we're asking readers to tell us a little more about themselves and their participation. Your feedback will help us understand who's taking part in The Big Read, how valuable the materials and events are, and how the program could be improved. This survey should take less than 10 minutes of your time.

We could also really use your help in a follow-up survey. If you'd be willing to take part, please provide your contact information, which will remain confidential and will not be shared or sold. Thank you!

Name: _____ Zip code: _____

I prefer to be contacted by: Phone: (_____) _____ Email: _____

A. Your Participation in The Big Read

1. In which local Big Read program did you participate?

Organization (e.g., library, museum, civic or cultural center, college or university): _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip code: _____

2. Which book did you read for The Big Read? (Check one.)

☐ *The Age of Innocence* ☐ *The Grapes of Wrath* ☐ *A Lesson Before Dying*
☐ *Bless Me, Ultima* ☐ *The Great Gatsby* ☐ *The Maltese Falcon*
☐ *The Call of the Wild* ☐ *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter* ☐ *My Ántonia*
☐ *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* ☐ *The Joy Luck Club* ☐ *The Shawl*
☐ *Fahrenheit 451* ☐ *To Kill a Mockingbird* ☐ *Their Eyes Were Watching God*
☐ *A Farewell to Arms*

3. Was this book: ☐ a new read? ☐ one you had read before?

4. Did you finish the book? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If not, how far did you get?

☐ A quarter of the way or less ☐ About halfway ☐ Three quarters of the way or more

5. How did you hear about The Big Read? (Check all that apply.)

☐ Television ☐ Radio ☐ Poster ☐ Mail
☐ Newspaper ☐ Magazine ☐ Bookstore ☐ Word-of-mouth
☐ Website ☐ Library or museum ☐ Reader's Guide ☐ Other: _____ (please specify)

6. If you checked:

Television, did you see a: ☐ News story ☐ Advertisement
Radio, did you hear a: ☐ News story ☐ Advertisement

7. Please indicate whether you engaged in the following activities during The Big Read, and, if so, whether this was the first time you had done so.

	I did this.		If yes, was it the first time?	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Got a library card.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Checked out a book or tape from the local library.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Attended a literary event at the local library.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Joined a book club (or attended a meeting).	☐	☐	☐	☐
Attended a literature-related event at a museum, university, or other institution.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other: (please specify)	☐	☐	☐	☐

8. How did you participate in events?

☐ Mostly on my own
☐ Mostly with someone else (e.g., family member, friend)
☐ As a teacher, mostly with my students

B. Your Reading Preferences

9. With the exception of books required for work or school, did you read any books in the 12 months prior to *The Big Read*?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, how many books? _____

10. Again with the exception of books or activities required for work or school, did you do any of the following in the 12 months prior to The Big Read?

In the 12 months prior to The Big Read, did you…	Yes	No
read any plays?	☐	☐
read any poetry?	☐	☐
read any novels or short stories?	☐	☐
use the internet to learn about, read, or discuss topics related to literature (novels, poetry, or plays)?	☐	☐
listen to a reading of poetry, either live or recorded?	☐	☐
listen to a reading of novels or books, either live or recorded?	☐	☐
purchase a book (for leisure reading)?	☐	☐
check out a book (for leisure reading) from your public library?	☐	☐

11. Please rate how much you enjoy reading, on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being "not at all" and 10 being "very much."

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

12. What kinds of things do you like to read for pleasure? (Check all that apply.)

☐ Novels ☐ Magazines

☐ Comics/Graphic novels ☐ Textbooks
☐ Newspapers ☐ Non-fiction books
☐ Other: _____
(please specify)

13. On average, how much time do you spend reading for pleasure every day?
☐ Less than 15 minutes ☐ 30 to 45 minutes ☐ An hour or more
☐ 15 to 30 minutes ☐ 45 minutes to an hour

14. Which types of reading materials do you purchase regularly? (Check all that apply.)
☐ Novels ☐ Magazines
☐ Comics/Graphic novels ☐ Textbooks
☐ Newspapers ☐ Non-fiction books
☐ Other: _____
(please specify)

15. Where do you acquire books? (Check all that apply.)
☐ Bookstores ☐ School or classroom libraries ☐ Online book retailers
☐ Public libraries ☐ Friends or family ☐ Yard sales
☐ Other: _____

(please specify)

16. The last book I read for pleasure was: _____

17. I read the above book because: (Check all that apply.)
☐ Someone suggested it. ☐ I saw it in a bookstore. ☐ It has been on the best seller lists.
☐ I read a good review. ☐ I saw it in a public library. ☐ Other: _____
☐ It received attention in the media. ☐ I am interested in the author.
(please specify)

C. Your Thoughts on The Big Read

18. Please select the response that best describes how much you agree with the following statements about The Big Read.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Reading ***The Big Read*** book was very worthwhile.	☐	☐	☐	☐
I talk more about books with friends or family than before ***The Big Read***.	☐	☐	☐	☐
The Big Read events deepened my understanding of the novel.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Participating in ***The Big Read*** made me want to read more often for pleasure.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Reading this book increased my understanding of the topics, themes, or historical period of the book.	☐	☐	☐	☐
This book was a good choice for my community.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Participating in ***The Big Read*** made me more comfortable attending literary	☐	☐	☐	☐

or arts events.				
I'd like to take part in another ***Big Read***.	☐	☐	☐	☐

19. Please check whether you used any of the following during ***The Big Read***, then rate each one on a scale of 1 to 4.

	Used:	Inadequate	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
Big Read Web site	☐	1	2	3	4
Big Read CD/Audio Guide	☐	1	2	3	4
Big Read Reader's Guide	☐	1	2	3	4

D. Demographic Information

20. What is your age? ☐ under 18 years old ☐ 25-34 ☐ 45-54 ☐ 65-74
☐ 18-24 ☐ 35-44 ☐ 55-64 ☐ 75 or older

21. What is your race?

☐ American Indian or Alaska native ☐ Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander

☐ Asian ☐ White
☐ Black or African American ☐ Other: _____
(please specify)

22. Are you Hispanic or Latino? ☐ Yes ☐ No

23. Are you: ☐ Female ☐ Male

24. What language do you speak at home?

☐ English
☐ Spanish
☐ Other: _____
(please specify)

25. If you speak a language other than English at home, how well do you speak English?

☐ Fluently ☐ Less than fluently

26. What is your highest level of schooling?

☐ Less than 9th grade ☐ Associate's degree
☐ 9th to 12th grade, no diploma ☐ Bachelor's degree
☐ High school graduate/GED ☐ Graduate or professional degree
☐ Some college, no degree

27. Are you currently a student? ☐ Yes ☐ No (If not, please skip to #29.)

28. If so, what grade are you in: ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12
☐ College ☐ Graduate student ☐ Post-graduate

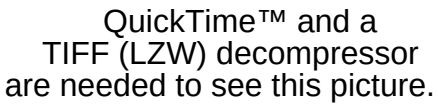
29. Are you currently in the Armed Forces? ☐ Yes ☐ No

30. Would you like to tell us anything else about your Big Read experience?

Thank you for your time!

OMB control No. 3135-0121, Expiration date 7/31/08

The Big Read Event Feedback Card


QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (LZW) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

The Big Read Post Card

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (LZW) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

Big Read Participants Follow-Up Survey (administered online and by telephone]

About 3 months ago you participated in The Big Read and indicated that you would be willing to respond to a few questions in a follow-up study. This survey won't take more than 3-5 minutes of your time, but it is very important. Answers from readers like you will help us measure the impact of The Big Read nationwide. Thank you for our help.

Name:_____

Gender: ❒female ❒male

Age: [drop-down menu]

What is your highest level of schooling? [drop-down menu]

1. In which Big Read program did you participate? [drop-down menu of projects/sites]

2. With the exception of books required for work or school, have you read any books in the 3 months since participating in The Big Read? ❒ Yes ❒ No

   If yes, how many books? _____
   Is that an increase in the number of books you typically read? ❒ Yes ❒ No

   Was your selection of that book(s) affected by your participation in The Big Read? (Was it another book by the same author, a book on a similar theme, a recommendation you received at a Big Read event, etc.?
   ❒ Yes ❒ No

   If yes, how?

3. Since The Big Read and now, did you read any
   Plays ❒ Yes ❒ No
   Poetry ❒ Yes ❒ No
   Novels or short stories ❒ Yes ❒ No

   If yes, would you say your reading of any of those works was a result of participating in ***The Big Read?***

4. During the 3 months between The Big Read and now did you listen to:
   A reading of poetry, either live or recorded? ❒ Yes ❒ No
   If yes, is that a result of The Big Read? ❒ Yes ❒ No

   A reading of novels or books ***either live or recorded?*** ❒ Yes ❒ No
   If yes, is that a result of The Big Read? ❒ Yes ❒ No

5. For the list of activities below, please indicate whether or not you've done each one, and then whether that was a result of your participation in The Big Read.

Since The Big Read and now have you:

used the Internet to learn about, read, or discuss topics related to literature—novels, poetry, or plays?

❒ Yes ❒ No

If yes, is that a result of The Big Read? ❒ Yes ❒ No

made a book purchase (for leisure reading)? ❒Yes ❒No

If yes, is that a result of The Big Read? ❒ Yes ❒ No

checked out a book (for leisure reading) from your public library?

❒Yes ❒No

If yes, is that a result of The Big Read? ❒ Yes ❒ No

attended any programs at your public library? ❒Yes ❒No

If yes, is that a result of The Big Read? ❒ Yes ❒ No

attended any other reading-related events? ❒Yes ❒No

If yes, is that a result of The Big Read? ❒ Yes ❒ No

6. Have there been any changes in where or how you acquire books?

❒ Yes ❒ No

If yes, have you checked more books out of your library? ❒ Yes ❒ No

… have you borrowed more books from friends or family? ❒ Yes ❒ No

… have you purchased more books? ❒ Yes ❒ No

7. How would you rate your enjoyment of reading, on a scale of 1-10, with 1 being you don't enjoy it at all and 10 being you enjoy it very much? [drop-down menu]

Has your enjoyment of reading increased since then as a result of The Big Read?

❒Yes ❒No

8. Do you spend more time reading as a result of participating in The Big Read?

❒Yes ❒No

9. We realize that many of you were already active readers before The Big Read. If you did not cite increases in reading activities in your responses, or did not indicate that those were due to The Big Read, is it because you would have done these things anyway? ❒ Yes ❒ No

10. Do you have any other comments you'd like to add? [text box]

Thank you very much for your time!

OMB control No. 3135-0121, Expiration date 7/31/08

The Big Read
Student Checklist

City/town:_____ State:_____ Date:_____

1. Did you read or are you currently reading the Big Read book? ☐ Yes

2. Did you attend a Big Read event? ☐ Yes ☐

3. Which of the following do you read for pleasure or for personal interests, and in what format?

	On paper?	Online?
General:		
Blogs	☐	☐
Business/finance guides	☐	☐
Catalogues	☐	☐
Children's books	☐	☐
Comic books/comic strips	☐	☐
Graphic (sequential) novels	☐	☐
Health/diet books	☐	☐
Cookbooks	☐	☐
Humor/joke books	☐	☐
Mystery literature	☐	☐
Newspapers	☐	☐
Non-fiction/factual books	☐	☐
Novels	☐	☐
Magazines, journals	☐	☐

	On paper?	Online?
Plays	☐	☐
Poetry	☐	☐
Religious or inspirational books	☐	☐
Romance novels	☐	☐
Science fiction	☐	☐
Self-help books	☐	☐
Short stories	☐	☐
Song lyrics/liner notes	☐	☐
Technical manuals	☐	☐
Travel books/guides	☐	☐
Young adult fiction	☐	☐

Reference tools:

☐ Encyclopedias ☐ Wikipedia NA ☐

Electronic Communication:

☐ Email ☐ Text messages (on cell phones) ☐ IM ☐ Social networking websites (Facebook, MySpace, etc.)

Other:

☐ Audio-books (listening)

Other things you read for pleasure? *(Please list all.)*

4. On average, how much time do you spend reading for pleasure every day?

☐ Less than 15 minutes ☐ 45 minutes –1 hour
☐ 15 – 30 minutes ☐ 1 hour or more
☐ 30 – 45 minutes

5. Are you happy with the amount you read on a weekly basis for pleasure? (*Check one box.*)

☐ Yes
☐ No, but I would like to read more
☐ Yes, but I would like to read more
☐ No, and I don't want to read more

6. How do you like to spend your free time? Please tell us how often you do each of the following activities.

	Almost every day	Once or twice a week	Once or twice a month	A few times a year	Never or hardly ever
Watch TV, movies	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Online activities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Listen to music	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Attend arts performances/events	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Practice music, perform in arts activities or events	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Hang out with friends	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Read	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Participate in sports, exercise, outdoor activities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

7. I would be more likely to read if: (*Check as many boxes as you think apply.*)

☐ I had more time.
☐ I enjoyed it more.
☐ I had better access to a library.
☐ I knew what to read.
☐ My school encouraged me more.
☐ Someone read aloud to me or I had books on tape.
☐ I could download more reading materials.
☐ Reading was easier for me.
☐ My parent(s)/teacher(s)/Adults encouraged me more.
☐ It was about subjects I am interested in.
☐ Books had more pictures.
☐ I could afford to buy more books or magazines.
☐ I could find more reading materials in the language we speak at home.
☐ Stories and books were shorter.
☐ My friends read more.

Other reasons you might read more? (*Please list all.*):

8. Since The Big Read, have you:

	No	Yes	No	Yes
			If YES, was this as a result of The Big Read?	
a. Read another book?	☐	☐	☐☐	☐ ☐
b. Read another book suggested by The Big Read?	☐	☐	☐☐	☐ ☐
c. Checked out a book (for leisure reading) from your public library?	☐	☐	☐☐	☐ ☐
d. Attended any programs at your public library?	☐	☐	☐☐	☐ ☐
e. Attended any other reading-related events?	☐	☐	☐☐	☐ ☐
f. Used the Internet to learn about, read, or discuss topics related to literature, novels, poetry, or plays?	☐	☐	☐☐	☐ ☐

9. What is your age?

☐ *under 13* ☐ *13-15* ☐ *16-18* ☐ *19-21* ☐ *22-25* ☐ *26-29* ☐ *30-34* ☐ *35 and above*

10. What is your current grade/level in school?

☐ 6 ☐ 10 ☐ College
☐ 7 ☐ 11 ☐ Graduate student
☐ 8 ☐ 12 ☐ Post-graduate
☐ 9 ☐ Junior or community college

11. Are you: ☐ Female ☐ Male

12. What is your race?

☐ American Indian or Alaska native
☐ Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
☐ Asian
☐ White
☐ Black or African American
☐ Other:_____
(please specify)

13. Are you Hispanic or Latino? ☐ Yes ☐ No

14. What language do you usually speak at home?

☐ English ☐ Other:_____

☐ Spanish
(please specify)

15. If you speak a language other than English at home, how well do you speak English?

☐ Fluently ☐ Less than fluently

16. Do you read in a language other than English?

☐ No ☐ Yes

17. If Yes, what language(s)?_____

_____

_____ *(please specify)*

Thanks!

OMB control No. 3135-0121, Expiration date 7/31/08

The Big Read Grantees Survey

(administered online)

As part of our external evaluation of The Big Read, we'd like to learn more about your Big Read project and its impact on your organization and your community. Feedback from you and other grantees will help us understand how The Big Read affects literary reading in your community, how effective it is in bringing organizations together, and which implementation models work best. ***Please note that this survey is separate from the final reports you may have filled out and submitted to Arts Midwest.*** All your responses will remain confidential, and no names or personally identifying information will appear in our reports. The survey should take less than 20 minutes to complete. Thank you for your help!

A. Background

1. Name: _____

2. Organization: _____

3. Title/Position: _____

4. Your Big Read project: [drop-down menu of Cycle 2 projects]

5. About many people work or volunteer full-time for your organization? [text box]

6. How many of these people were involved in The Big Read? [text box]

7. Have you or your organization sponsored or promoted other local literature efforts?

   ☐ Yes ☐ No

8. Have you or your organization worked on other NEA or federally funded arts or literature efforts?

   ☐ Yes ☐ No

B. Forming and Sustaining Partnerships

9. Overall, how would you rate the partnerships formed for your Big Read project?

not at all successful	somewhat successful	moderately successful	very successful
1	2	3	4

10. What types of partnerships or structures were most effective? In other words, what factors made for the best partnerships? [text box]

11. What were some of the major challenges in forming or sustaining partnerships? What might you do differently if you were partnering on another ***Big Read*** in the future? [text box]

12. Has The Big Read improved your organization's ability to serve its community and possibly conduct future large-scale programs? To what extent do you feel your experience with The Big Read has increased your organization's:

	No change	Modest increase	Substantial increase
a. capacity to attract audiences or build membership	☐	☐	☐
b. capacity to attract ***diverse*** audiences	☐	☐	☐
c. ability to meet the needs of your target populations	☐	☐	☐
d. awareness of community organizations for future collaborations	☐	☐	☐
e. ability to build coalitions	☐	☐	☐
f. skills in planning and executing events	☐	☐	☐
g. skills in promoting events	☐	☐	☐
h. skills in taking part in national initiatives	☐	☐	☐

13. If you checked "modest increase" or "substantial increase" for any of the items in question 15, please elaborate, noting which letter/item you're referring to: [text box]

14. How likely is it that The Big Read partnership(s) your formed will lead to other collaborations in literature and the arts?

very unlikely unlikely likely very likely

1 2 3 4

C. Attracting Audiences

15. Please indicate, in the first column, whether your Big Read featured the following types of events or activities, and, if so, how successful you were in attracting people to it. If you're unsure about your success, check the "not sure" box in the last column.

	Not a targeted audience	Not at all successful	Somewhat successful	Quite successful	Very successful	***Not sure***
a. Book club	☐	1	2	3	4	☐
b. Panel discussion	☐	1	2	3	4	☐
c. Author appearance	☐	1	2	3	4	☐
d. Biographer appearance	☐	1	2	3	4	☐

e. Public official appearance	☐	1	2	3	4	☐
f. Lecture or speech by some other person (e.g., scholar, local or national expert, actor or writer impersonator)	☐	1	2	3	4	☐
g. Public reading of your Big Read book	☐	1	2	3	4	☐
h. Theatrical event	☐	1	2	3	4	☐
i. Musical performance	☐	1	2	3	4	☐
j. Film screening	☐	1	2	3	4	☐
k. Family/community event (parade, outdoor festival, etc.)	☐	1	2	3	4	☐
l. Visual exhibit	☐	1	2	3	4	☐
m. Other (describe):	☐	1	2	3	4	☐

16. The Big Read targets a wide audience, including readers, non-readers, youth, adults, and seniors. It also targets people typically drawn to literature or civic and cultural events, and people who aren't. Please indicate, in the first column, whether your Big Read targeted a particular audience, then, if so, how successful you were in attracting that audience. If you're unsure about your success, check the "not sure" box in the last column.

	Not a targeted audience	Not at all successful	Somewhat successful	Quite successful	Very successful	*Not sure*
a. Library patrons (those who use their library cards and attend events regularly)	☐	1	2	3	4	☐
b. Readers new to literary fiction (patrons or card holders who rarely check out literary texts/attend events)	☐	1	2	3	4	☐
c. Non-readers	☐	1	2	3	4	☐
d. Non-native English speakers	☐	1	2	3	4	☐
e. Teachers/students participating as a class/in-school activity	☐	1	2	3	4	☐
f. Young adults/students participating as an out-of-school activity	☐	1	2	3	4	☐
g. Populations underserved because of geographic, ethnic, or economic barriers	☐	1	2	3	4	☐
h. College and university students and faculties	☐	1	2	3	4	☐
i. Seniors	☐	1	2	3	4	☐
j. Other (describe):	☐	1	2	3	4	☐

17. Referring to the letters in #16, please describe recruitment or outreach strategies that you think successfully attracted your targeted audiences, and who those audiences were. [text box]

18. Also describe any challenges you encountered in reaching certain audiences. [text box]

19. In the schools that participated, which grade level(s) were involved in your Big Read?

☐ elementary schools ☐ high schools ☐ 4-year colleges
☐ middle or jr. high schools ☐ 2-year colleges ☐ other_____

20. How did you involve schools? Please list a few things teachers and students did as part of your Big Read. [text box]

21. In working with schools, what sort of feedback on The Big Read did you hear from teachers, if any*?*

very negative somewhat negative somewhat positive very positive unknown

1 2 3 4

22. What kind of feedback, if any, did you get from students?

very negative somewhat negative somewhat positive very positive unknown

1 2 3 4

23. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements by checking the appropriate box.

The Big Read…	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not sure
changed attitudes about literary reading [among young adults, etc.]	☐	☐	☐	☐	○
expanded the audience for arts and literature-related events.	☐	☐	☐	☐	○
expanded the young-adult audience for arts and literature-related events.	☐	☐	☐	☐	○
increased the visibility of the library and library programs.	☐	☐	☐	☐	○
helped bring diverse groups together to talk about literature.	☐	☐	☐	☐	○
generated an interest in the themes and issues addressed in our Big Read book.	☐	☐	☐	☐	○
generated an interest in [local connections to] the historical periods portrayed in our ***Big Read*** book.	☐	☐	☐	☐	○
laid the groundwork for future collaborations to boost an interest in literature.	☐	☐	☐	☐	○

D. Using Support and Resources

24. How would you rate each of the following in supporting your Big Read effort? If you did not use a resource or attend an orientation session, check N/A (not applicable).

	Inadequate	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent	Not applicable
Overall support from the NEA and Arts Midwest	1	2	3	4	O
NEA technical assistance	1	2	3	4	O
Big Read Organizers Guide	1	2	3	4	O
Big Read Web site	1	2	3	4	O
Big Read CD/audio guides	1	2	3	4	O
Big Read Readers' Guides	1	2	3	4	O
Big Read Teachers' Guides	1	2	3	4	O
Big Read publicity materials	1	2	3	4	O
Public Service Announcements	1	2	3	4	O
Banners, posters, bookmarks, etc.	1	2	3	4	O
Other Big Read community web sites	1	2	3	4	O

25. What additional support, promotional materials, or resources—from the national level, or from local participants and partners—would have helped you implement your Big Read? [text box]

26. Did your project have its own ***Big Read*** web site? ☐ Yes ☐ No (If not, skip to # 32.)

If so, please provide the URL: _____[text box]

27. How would you rate your web site in supporting your Big Read effort?

Inadequate satisfactory good excellent
1 2 3 4

28. Did your project web site include a blog, forum, or chat feature? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If so, please provide the URL: _____[text box]

29. Did you run the NEA Public Service Announcement about your book on your website? ☐ Yes ☐ No

30. Did you produce a Public Service Announcement locally? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If so, did you run it on your website? ☐ Yes ☐ No

E. Final Comments

31. To what extent do you feel you were successful in expanding the numbers of those in your community who read literary works for pleasure and enlightenment?

Not at all successful	somewhat successful	moderately successful	very successful
1	2	3	4

32. Please share what struck you as compelling evidence of the impact The Big Read had on your community and literary reading. Include such information as observed changes in library membership or traffic, if applicable. [text box]

33. How did you distribute the books purchased for The Big Read? [check all that apply]

☐ Giveaways in cafes, rail stations, museums, etc. ☐ Pass alongs, from reader to reader
☐ Classroom sets to schools ☐ Additions to the library collection
☐ Donations to other collections (please specify: senior centers, arts centers, juvenile centers, jails)
☐ Other_____

34. Would you want to organize The Big Read in your community again? ☐ Yes ☐ No

35. If no, what about another kind of community reading program? ☐ Yes ☐ No

36. Do you have any final comments on The Big Read? [text box]

OMB control No. 3135-0121, Expiration date 7/31/08

APPENDIX B:
RESPONSES BY CYCLE, SITE, AND INSTRUMENT

Phase 1, Cycle 1

Site Code	Grantee Name	City/Town	State	Event Cards	Post Cards	Participant Survey	Participant Follow-up	Grantee Survey
11241	Anchorage Municipal Libraries	Anchorage	AK	0	43	4	1	0
10979	Kachemak Bay Campus-Kenai Peninsula College	Homer	AK	43	20	2	2	1
10968	Huntsville-Madison Co. Public Library	Huntsville	AL	1	22	12	7	1
10971	Fayetteville Arkansas Public Library	Fayetteville	AR	197	15	28	0	1
11038	Ozarka College	Melbourne	AR	0	0	0	0	0
10830	Fresno County Library	Fresno	CA	1	6	5	6	1
11028	Montalvo Arts Center	Saratoga	CA	0	0	0	0	0
11179	County of Los Angeles Public Library	Los Angeles	CA	0	13	0	0	0
11187	National Steinbeck Center	Salinas	CA	0	0	0	0	0
10802	Peninsula Library System	San Mateo	CA	13	26	23	4	1
11135	City of Bridgeport	Bridgeport	CT	0		0	0	1
10947	Mattatuck Historical Society	Waterbury	CT	106	10	7	4	3
11091	Hartford Public Library	Hartford	CT	0	3	1	0	1
10945	New Haven International Festival	New Haven	CT	0	0	0		0
10962	Humanities Council of Washington	Washington	DC	0	10	5	4	7
10300	Brevard County Libraries	Cocoa	FL	53	8	2	2	1
10973	Communities in Schools of Putnam Co.	Palatka	FL	0	68	8	5	1
10946	Florida Center for the Literary Arts	Miami	FL	129	18	10	2	2
10877	Orange County Library System	Orlando	FL	0	1	3	0	1
11047	Armstrong Atlantic State University	Savannah	GA	0	4	0	0	1
11048	Sioux City Public Library	Sioux City	IA	0	5	4	2	1
11128	Ames Public Library	Ames	IA	0	0	0	0	0
10891	The Cabin	Boise	ID	47	17	6	7	1
10931	Cook Memorial Public Library D	Libertyville	IL	64	15	5	2	7
10907	Peoria Public Library	Peoria	IL	101	6	13	8	1
11139	Sandburg Days Festival	Galesburg	IL	197	6	15	13	0
11167	Sterling Public Library	Sterling	IL	91	34	8	5	1
10975	Bloomington Area Arts Council	Bloomington	IN	10	0	2	1	2
10862	Kosciusko Literacy Services In	Warsaw	IN	52	7	10	7	1
10690	Muncie Public Library	Muncie	IN	15	7	0	0	1
10997	Vigo County Public Library	Terre Haute	IN	0	6	27	3	1
10887	Johnson County Library	Shawnee Mission	KS	147	28	23	13	0
11041	Kansas City Kansas Public Library	Kansas City	KS	0	0	0	0	0
11205	Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library	Topeka	KS	21	17	20	5	2
10342	Louisville Free Public Library	Louisville	KY	0	2	8	1	1
11222	East Baton Rouge Parish Library	Baton Rouge	LA	0	31	53	10	1
10998	Maryland Public Television	Owings Mills	MD	3	15	6	4	1
11204	Patten Free Library	Bath	ME	0	0	0	0	0

10599	Jackson Community College	Jackson	MI	94	8	14	10	0
10824	Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians	Harbor Springs	MI	0	9	16	2	0
11066	Monroe County Community College	Monroe	MI	0	12	2	0	0
11137	Fergus Falls Center for the Arts	Fergus Falls	MN	136	57	32	16	2
11180	Grand Rapids Area Library	Grand Rapids	MI	0	0	0	0	0
10954	Washington University	St. Louis	MO	92	16	2	0	0
10349	Friends of Starkville Library	Starkville	MS	0	2	10	0	0
11117	Havre-Hill County Library Found	Harve	MT	122	4	11	4	0
11058	NC-A-B Tech Community College Foundation	Asheville	NC	31	28	4	2	1
10668	Craven-Pamlico-Carteret Region	New Bern	NC	13	7	4	2	0
11033	Cumberland County Public Library	Fayetteville	NC	125	40	32	21	2
11127	Lenoir Community College	Kinston	NC	419	15	48	17	1
11190	Rowan Public Library	Salisbury	NC	0	7	28	1	0
11102	Las Vegas-CLark County Library	Las Vegas	NV	0	9	8	1	1
11227	Just Buffalo Literary Center	Buffalo	NY	3	2	0	0	1
10925	Upper Hudson Library System	Albany	NY	0	0	0	0	0
10204	Cuyahoga Co. Public Library	Parma	OH	1	8	1	1	1
10922	Newark Public Library	Newark	OH	0	0	0	0	0
11176	Pioneer Library System	Norman	OK	76	29	11	6	0
10753	Stillwater Public Library	Stillwater	OK	0	4	23	5	1
11073	Fishtrap, Inc	Enterprise	OR	280	26	78	32	2
11064	Lycoming County Library System	Williamsport	PA	0	60	7	2	0
11125	Sumter County Library	Sumter	SC	107	12	6	3	1
11214	South Dakota Center of the Book	Brookings	SD	38	14	1	0	2
10785	El Paso Public Library	El Paso	TX	0	80	0	0	0
11206	Harris County Public LIbrary	Houston	TX	0	0	0	0	0
11195	Cedar City Public Library	Cedar City	UT	59	15	5	1	1
10815	Newport News Public Library System	Newport News	VA	0	15	8	6	0
10898	Pamunkey Regional Library	Hanover	VA	0	3	2	4	1
10800	Virginia Foundation for the Humanities	Charlottesville	VA	0	7	1	0	1
10930	Timberland Regional Library	Tumwater	WA	0	20	3	0	1
11032	University of Wisconsin Eau Claire	Eau Claire	WI	400	19	11	6	1
	TOTAL			6591	1981	678	260	64

Phase 1, Cycle 2

Site Code	Grantee Name	City/Town	State	Event Cards	Post cards	Participant survey	Participant Follow-up	Grantee Survey
23902	Ozark-Dale County Public Library	zark	AL	159	15	10	2	1
24017	Safford City - Graham County Library	Safford	AZ	4	36	4	1	3
24229	West Valley Arts Council	Avondale	AZ	7	4	3	1	1
20737	Berkeley Public Library	Berkeley	CA	0	6	3	2	1
20938	Cal Poly Pomona Foundation	Pomona	CA	0	0	5	0	3
21494	Contra Costa County Library	Pleasant Hill	CA	0	16	2	0	2
21654	County of Los Angeles Public Library	Downey	CA	0	27	34	0	2
23492	Los Medanos College	Pittsburg	CA	225	23	15	2	2
23936	Pleasanton Public Library	Pleasanton	CA	73	28	4	7	1
23972	Rancho Cucamonga Public Library Services	Rancho Cucamonga	CA	71	14	9	1	2
24009	Rural California Broadcasting Corporation KRCB	Rohnert Park	CA	184	68	25	4	3
24032	Shasta Public Libraries	Redding	CA	0	15	1	1	0
24247	Will & Company	Los Angeles	CA	59	7	13	0	0
10067	Adams State College	Alamosa	CO	0	24	1	1	1
20017	Arapahoe Library Friends Foundation, Inc.	Englewood	CO	12	24	7	8	3
24207	Weld Library District	Greeley	CO	0	2	3	4	1
11231	Alachua County Library District	Gainesville	FL	0	83	2	2	1
22337	Florida Center for the Book / Broward Public Library Foundation	Fort Lauderdale	FL	40	8	8	0	1
22861	Jacksonville Public Library	Jacksonville	FL	160	30	7	2	1
23574	Marion County Public Library System	Ocala	FL	155	4	70	0	4
23915	Pinellas Public Library Cooperative, ıc.	Clearwater	FL	7	3	3	12	1
22465	Golden Isles Arts and Humanities Association	Brunswick	GA	460	36	4	10	0
23781	Muscogee County Friends of Libraries	Columbus	GA	71	41	8	0	2
24189	Valdosta State University, Odum ibrary	Valdosta	GA	0	32	19	2	1
22528	Hawai'i Capital Cultural District	Honolulu	HI	36	3	1	2	2
22614	Hometown Perry, Iowa	Perry	IA	10	15	1	14	1
23505	Madison Library District	Rexburg	ID	533	35	8	6	1
20291	Aurora Public Library	Aurora	IL	161	18	3	3	2
20755	Beverly Arts Center	Chicago	IL	1	1	0	0	1
21102	Center for Asian Arts and Media at Columbia College Chicago	Chicago	IL	151	66	3	0	1
22161	DeKalb Public Library	DeKalb	IL	0	32	4	19	2
23857	Oak Park Public Library	Oak Park	IL	10	34	4	5	12
23894	Orland Park Public Library	Orland Park	IL	121	21	5	5	4
23967	Quad City Arts	Rock Island	IL	0	8	24	2	1
23976	Rend Lake College	Ina	IL	9	39	5	3	2
24039	Spoon River College	Canton	IL	0	2	0	1	0
24089	Sterling Public Library	Sterling	IL	110	35	2	0	0
22343	Frankfort Community Public Library	Frankfort	IN	0	41	4	4	5

22505	Harrison County Public Library	Corydon	IN	0	23	9	0	3
23834	New Castle-Henry County Public Library	New Castle	IN	0	0	0	0	1
23090	Kentucky State University	Frankfort	KY	53	0	4	0	1
22619	Houma Regional Arts Council	Houma	LA	38	3	7	0	0
20139	Attleboro Public Library	Attleboro	MA	2	8	3	9	1
23959	Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association	Deerfield	MA	2	21	3	2	3
21488	Community Foundation of Washington County MD, Inc.	Hagerstown	MD	0	10	10	4	2
22487	Harbel Community Foundation	ltimore	MD	208	5	8	2	1
24169	Towson University	Towson	MD	0	0	0	0	0
24264	Worcester County Library	Snow Hill	MD	4	3	2	1	1
23554	Maine Writers & Publishers Alliance	Portland	ME	161	9	7	1	1
21664	Cromaine District Library	Hartland	MI	0	32	7	0	1
22163	Detroit Public Library	Detroit	MI	94	58	12	29	4
22261	Escanaba Public Library	Escanaba	MI	1	8	1	4	5
22470	Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians	Suttons Bay	MI	172	2	27	0	1
22855	Ironwood Carnegie Library	Ironwood	MI	104	91	2	1	0
24203	Wayne-Metropolitan Community Action Agency	Wyandotte	MI	0	44	2	1	3
24223	West Shore Community College	Scottville	MI	12	30	8	4	2
21077	Carlton County Historical Society	Cloquet	MN	0	7	1	1	0
23906	Park University	Parkville	MO	0	0	0	0	0
23467	Lewis & Clark Library	Helena	MT	86	26	0	1	1
23472	Lincoln County Public Libraries	Libby	MT	174	27	13	4	0
23718	Montgomery Community College	Troy	NC	0	7	0	0	4
24014	Rutherford County Arts Council	Forest City	NC	0	28	7	0	0
21921	Dakota Prairie Regional Center for the Arts	New Rockford	ND	58	14	7	0	0
24031	Shakespeare Club-Lake Region Library	Devils Lake	ND	4	5	3	4	1
21240	Center for the Book at the New Hampshire State Library	Concord	NH	33	14	6	4	1
23856	Northeast Cultural Coop	Amherst	NH	0	14	6	2	0
21002	Caldwell Public Library	Caldwell	NJ	0	23	12	8	4
24179	United Way of Salem County	Salem	NJ	10	43	6	1	0
20745	Bernalillo County	Albuquerque	NM	0	12	5	0	1
22384	Georgia O'Keeffe Museum	Santa Fe	NM	0	10	0	2	1
22591	High Plains Writing Project	Roswell	NM	4	5	0	6	0
24139	The Regents of New Mexico State University	Las Cruces	NM	0	92	0	0	0
22358	Friends of Washoe County Library	Reno	NV	323	32	23	0	4
20829	Brooklyn Public Library	Brooklyn	NY	158	22	5	0	1
21472	Columbia University in the City of New York	New York	NY	50	2	4	0	0
22179	Dormann Library	Bath	NY	0	4	3	1	1
22801	Hudson Area Association Library	Hudson	NY	67	11	3	2	3
23961	Poughkeepsie Public Library District	Poughkeepsi	NY	0	4	1	0	0

23979	Research Foundation for and on behalfof SUNY Fredonia	Fredonia	NY	294	44	8	3	4
23980	Research Foundation of SUNY on behalf of SUNY New Paltz	New Paltz	NY	23	3	6	1	1
24232	Westchester Arts Council	White Plains	NY	0	81	2	1	1
24292	Writers & Books	Rochester	NY	1	0	12	3	2
24167	Toledo-Lucas County Public Library	edo	OH	14	6	0	0	1
23404	Lawton Public Library	Lawton	OK	26	5	0	2	3
22246	Easton Area Public Library	Easton	PA	15	6	1	12	0
23050	Jump Street	Harrisburg	PA	9	0	3	0	0
23336	Kittanning Public Library	Kittanning	PA	0	53	2	1	3
23732	Montgomery County Community College Foundation	Blue Bell	PA	0	3	1	0	0
24020	Scranton Public Library	Scranton	PA	3	16	8	1	6
24093	Susquehanna County Literacy Program	Montrose	PA	36	24	1	14	0
24119	The Arts Council of Erie	Erie	PA	2	44	1	2	1
23822	Museo de Arte de Ponce	Ponce	PR	3	0	0	0	1
23987	RI Coalition Against Domestic Violence	Warwick	RI	1	50	4	0	0
21349	Charleston County Public Library	Charleston	SC	118	9	10	1	1
24035	Spartanburg County Public Libraries	Spartanburg	SC	0	1	8	0	1
23986	Rhodes College	Memphis	TN	6	1	1	0	1
24136	The Dixie Carter Performing Arts Center	Huntingdon	TN	0	1	0	21	2
24332	YWCA Knoxville	Knoxville	TN	223	9	5	2	0
22356	Friends of Corpus Christi Public Libraries	Corpus Christi	TX	9	0	1	2	1
22707	Houston Library Board	Houston	TX	57	7	5	1	1
24112	Texas A & M University Kingsville	Kingsville	TX	112	27	5	2	8
21080	Cedar City Public Library	Cedar City	UT	0	1	3	0	2
23860	Orem Public Library	Orem	UT	101	38	0	2	1
24187	Utah Arts Council	Salt Lake City	UT	49	27	2	0	2
20058	Arlington Cultural Affairs Division	Arlington	VA	191	70	8	2	2
20520	Barter Foundation, Inc./Barter Theatre	Abingdon	VA	6	5	5	2	3
23990	Rockingham Library Assoc./ Massanutten Regional Library	Harrisonburg	VA	6	4	12	3	1
24190	Vermont Arts Council	Montpelier	VT	3	1	0	0	1
23219	King County Library System Foundation	Issaquah	WA	46	39	0	3	1
23910	Pat Graney Performance	Seattle	WA	0	38	4	0	1
24319	Yakima Valley Libraries	Yakima	WA	0	0	3	5	1
23571	Marathon County Public Library	Wausau	WI	475	14	3	3	2
24041	St. Croix Falls Public Library/Festival Theatre	St. Croix Falls	WI	31	2	7	6	0
24182	University of Wisconsin-Richland Library	Richland Center	WI	0	1	48	1	0
24193	Waukesha Public Library	Waukesha	WI	0	0	19	0	1
23579	Martinsburg-Berkeley County Public Libraries	Martinsburg	WVa	0	4	1	1	0
24154	The Wyoming Center for the Book Inc	Cheyenne	WY	4	0	3	13	4

	TOTAL			6511	2279	743	330	183

Phase 2, Cycle 1

Site Code	Grantee Name	City	State	Participant Survey	Participant Follow-up	Grantee Survey
27210	Sheldon Museum & Cultural Center Inc.	Haines	AK	23	11	1
27715	Anchorage Public Library	Anchorage	AK	22	0	1
27225	Jefferson County Library Cooperative (JCLC)	Birmingham	AL	92	14	0
27383	Huntsville-Madison County Public Library	Huntsville	AL	8	0	0
27400	Auburn University (CMD Center for the Arts & Humanities)	Auburn	AL	1	0	0
27646	Gadsden Cultural Arts Foundation	Gadsden	AL	0	0	0
26318	Mono County Libraries	Mammoth Lakes	CA	39	1	0
27233	Friends of the Encinitas Library	Encinitas	CA	52	0	0
27499	Orange County Public Library	Santa Ana	CA	3	0	0
27633	National Steinbeck Center	Salinas	CA	51	6	0
27702	Stockton-San Joaquin County Public Library	Stockton	CA	85	7	1
27725	County of Los Angeles Public Library	Downey	CA	2	0	0
27743	Black Storytellers of San Diego, Inc.	Chula Vista	CA	76	0	0
27291	Aspen Writers' Foundation	Aspen	CO	6	0	0
27608	Delta County Public Library District	Paonia	CO	1	0	0
27496	New Haven International Festival of Arts & Ideas	New Haven	CT	1	0	0
27575	City of Norwalk	Norwalk	CT	1	0	0
27603	City of Bridgeport	Bridgeport	CT	1	0	0
27716	Hartford Public Library	Hartford	CT	8	0	1
26853	Humanities Council of Washington DC	Washington	DC	0	0	1
26865	Clewiston Public Library c/o Hendry County Library Cooperative	Palatka	FL	0	0	1
27524	Daytona Beach Community College	Fort Lauderdale	FL	3	0	0
27542	Orange County Library System	Orlando	FL	1	0	0
27619	Florida Center for the Literary Arts at Miami Dade College	Clewiston	FL	1	0	0
27632	Florida Center for the Book / Broward Public Library Foundation	Miami	FL	0	2	0
27648	Communities In Schools of Putnam County Inc.	Daytona Beach	FL	1	0	0
27761	Young Performing Artists (YPAs), Inc.	Wildwood	FL	15	0	0
27227	Cherokee Regional Library System	LaFayette	GA	117	2	0
27374	Live Oak Public Libraries Foundation	Savannah	GA	2	0	0
27762	National Black Arts Festival	Atlanta	GA	0	0	0
26913	State Historical Library.Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs	Des Moines	IA	1	0	0
27564	Carnegie-Stout Public Library	Dubuque	IA	5	0	0
27657	Waukee Public Library	Waukee	IA	52	13	1
27334	The Cabin	Boise	ID	1	0	0

26886	Galesburg Public Library	Galesburg	IL	24	3	0
27371	University of Illinois, Board of Trustees	Champaign	IL	59	5	0
27600	Peoria Public Library	Peoria	IL	0	0	0
27622	Danville Area Community College	Danville	IL	4	0	0
27728	Beverly Arts Center	Chicago	IL	0	0	0
27795	Fremont Public Library	Mundelein	IL	54	3	1
26938	Vigo County Public Library	Terre Haute	IN	39	3	1
27245	TerraFirma, a program of DeKalb County Community Foundation, Inc.	Auburn	IN	11	3	1
27246	Kosciusko Literacy Services Inc	Warsaw	IN	1	0	0
27430	Muncie Public Library	Muncie	IN	1	0	0
27706	Jackson County Public Library	Seymour	IN	0	0	1
27778	Community Foundation of Morgan County, Inc.	Mooresville	IN	15	0	0
26901	Johnson County Library	Shawnee Mission	KS	1	0	1
27278	Gateway Community & Technical College for Kenton Co Adult Edu	Covington	KY	11	0	0
27661	Owensboro Community and Technical College	Owensboro	KY	40	3	0
27143	Houma Regional Arts Council	Houma	LA	2	0	0
27565	East Baton Rouge Parish Library	Baton Rouge	LA	17	2	1
27618	The Performing Arts Society of Acadiana	Lafayette	LA	0	0	0
27251	UMass Memorial Health Care, Inc.	Worcester	MA	15	3	2
27588	University of Massachusettes Boston	Boston	MA	4	0	0
27596	Shrewsbury Public Library	Shrewsbury	MA	31	0	1
26710	College of Southern Maryland	La Plata	MD	18	0	0
27242	MPT Foundation, Inc.	Owings Mills	MD	0	0	1
27586	Annapolis Charter 300 Committee of the Annapolis Community Foundation	Annapolis	MD	2	0	0
26399	Auburn Public Library	Auburn	ME	2	0	0
26926	Jackson District Library	Jackson	MI	26	0	0
27403	Genesee District Library	Flint	MI	0	0	0
27629	The Foundation at Monroe County Community College	Monroe	MI	2	0	0
27283	St. Cloud State University	St. Cloud	MN	0	0	0
27639	Grand Rapids Area Library	Grand Rapids	MN	0	0	0
27752	Marshall-Lyon County Library	Marshall	MN	2	0	0
27754	Fergus Falls, A Center for the Arts	Fergus Falls	MN	1	0	0
27526	Jefferson Davis Campus-Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College	Gulfport	MS	13	4	0
27710	Mississippi Valley State University	Itta Bena	MS	19	2	0
27130	Lenoir Community College	Kinston	NC	8	0	0
27620	Bennett College for Women	Greensboro	NC	0	0	0
27696	Together We Read	Asheville	NC	5	0	1
27717	Friends of the Cumberland County Public Library & Info Center	Fayetteville	NC	75	3	1
27721	Livingstone College	Salisbury	NC	1	0	0
27799	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Chapel Hill	NC	0	0	0
27230	The Jamestown Fine Arts Association	Jamestown	ND	0	0	1
27424	Omaha Reads	Omaha	NE	64	1	0

27546	Parsippany Troy Hills Library System	Parsippany	NJ	1	0	0
27703	Boy Scouts of America, Burlington County Council	Westhampton	NJ	0	0	0
27226	Las Vegas-Clark County Library District	Las Vegas	NV	1	0	0
24169	Monroe County Library System	Rochester	NY	6	9	1
26236	African Voices Communications, Inc.	New York	NY	60	0	1
26852	Foothills Performing Arts Center	Oneonta	NY	0	0	0
26976	Long Island Traditions	Port Washington	NY	0	0	0
27204	Wood Library Association	Canandaigua	NY	10	3	0
27266	Southeast Steuben County Library	Corning	NY	1	0	1
27599	The Mercantile Library Center for Fiction	New York	NY	1	0	0
27609	Just Buffalo Literary Center Inc.	Buffalo	NY	23	2	0
27691	Upper Hudson Library System	Albany	NY	3	0	0
27699	The Research Foundation of SUNY on behalf of SUNY Cortland	Albany	NY	1	0	0
26628	Southern State Community College	Sardinia	OH	48	0	0
26871	Northwest State Community College	Archbold	OH	0	0	0
27290	Massillon Museum	Massillon	OH	0	0	1
27525	Delaware County District Library	Delaware	OH	9		1
26856	Public Library of Enid and Garfield County	Enid	OK	7	0	0
27259	Pioneer Library System	Norman	OK	11	0	0
27558	Oregon Alliance for Arts Education	Salem	OR	7	2	1
27617	The Friends of St. Helens Public Library	St. Helens	OR	19	5	0
27676	Libraries of Eastern Oregon	Fossil	OR	0	0	
27287	Altoona Area Public Library	Altoona	PA	4	0	0
27539	American Readers Theatre	Shohola	PA	4	1	1
27569	Ephrata Public Library	Ephrata	PA	0	0	0
27755	The August Wilson Center for African American Culture	Pittsburgh	PA	2	0	0
27672	West Bay Collaborative	Warwick	RI	1	0	0
27531	Benedict College	Columbia	SC	137	2	1
27638	South Dakota Humanities Council	Brookings	SD	3	0	0
27247	City of Franklin	Franklin	TN	1	0	1
27572	Adventure Science Center	Nashville	TN	0	0	1
27770	South Central Tennessee Workforce Alliance	Columbia	TN	2	0	1
26677	Northeast Lakeview College	Live Oak	TX	8	0	1
26790	Friends of the Marfa Public Library	Marfa	TX	26	1	0
27141	Latino Cultural Center, a division of the OCA City of Dallas	Dallas	TX	2	0	1
27304	Communities In Schools Southeast Texas, Inc.	Beaumont	TX	69	0	1
27612	San Antonio Public Library Foundation	San Antonio	TX	16	0	0
27636	Weatherford College	Weatherford	TX	3	0	1
27689	University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College	Brownsville	TX	0	0	0
27729	El Paso Public Library	El Paso	TX	2	0	0
27343	Virginia Foundation for the Humanities	Charlottesville	VA	1	2	0

27378	The Community Foundation of the Central Blue Ridge	Staunton	VA	14	6	1
27604	Lonesome Pine Regional Library	Wise	VA	53	0	0
27664	Hampton University	Hampton	VA	0	0	0
27406	VI Council on the Arts	St Thomas	VI	2	1	0
26945	Spokane Public Library	Spokane	WA	24	5	2
27350	North Central Regional Library	Wenatchee	WA	0	0	0
27739	Bainbridge Public Library	Bainbridge Isl.	WA	11	2	0
26179	Milwaukee Public Library	Milwaukee	WI	6	0	0
27281	Peninsula Players Theatre Foundation, Inc.	Fish Creek	WI	46	1	0
27669	University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire	Eau Claire	WI	0	0	0
	TOTALS			1883	133	38