



## 2024-3051 NEA Big Read

Application ID  
2024-3051 NEA Big Read

Application Type  
NEA Big Read

Organization Information  
WRITE OUT LOUD  
2358 UNIVERSITY AVE 179  
SAN DIEGO, CA 92104-2720  
Phone: 619-944-8953

Mission Statement  
The mission of Write Out Loud is to inspire, challenge and entertain by reading literature aloud to all ages.

Annual Operating Budget  
\$150,000-\$249,999

Location Designation  
Metropolitan

[REDACTED]

Publicity name

What should we call your organization when we conduct any future publicity?

Write Out Loud

## Project Summary

Please provide one to two sentences that summarize your project in plain, easy to understand language. This description will be displayed publicly when the grantees are announced.

THE BEST WE COULD BE by Thi Bui will help teen and adult San Diegans understand more about what it means to be an immigrant here, through one family's personal experience. Opportunities to explore immigration, displacement, family, one's place in one's community, war, and memoir will be provided in libraries and classrooms via book discussions, visual art and writing workshops, and other events.

## Short description

Please write a brief, one-paragraph, high-level description of your project. Cover the key highlights of your project and the minimum programming requirements as stated in the application guidelines.

Copies (3,000) of THE BEST WE COULD BE by Thi Bui (including alternative MEXIKID by Pedro Martin for middle grades) will be distributed to students via area school districts. A kick-off event (book giveaway/writing contest announcement) for the broad community will take place in October 2024 at San Diego Central Library (a long- time partner). Visual art, graphic novel & writing workshops (3+) for ages 9 - adult will be provided in library branches, classrooms and partner venues. April 2025 activities include: writing contest winners presented at a public event; Student Awards Celebration and Presentation of visual, literary, media & performance art inspired by the book; book-inspired visual art displayed in libraries; discussions of the book's themes at three partner venues. Also in April 2025 will be a ticketed event—STORY CONCERT—reading aloud short stories and poetry about immigration, displacement, and tolerance. Above programs and books will be provided free to the community.

## Prior grant recipient?

Have you received a grant from Arts Midwest before?

Yes

## Project Start Date

When will the project begin?

09/01/2024

## Project End Date

When will the project end?

05/31/2025

## Theme and book description

Provide a rationale for your chosen NEA Big Read book and how you will use it with the theme of Where We Live.

Located on the US border with Mexico, San Diego has a large immigrant community. The city's foreign-born population, including refugees, coming from 115 countries and speaking 68 different languages, comprises 27.1% of the city's total population, more than double the 13.7% immigrants in the total US population.

THE BEST WE COULD DO is an ideal book for our community, both immigrant and non-immigrant, as it offers a new perspective of people we may not understand or who may seem "other" to us. This memoir presents non-immigrants with the sometimes devastating events that may have brought immigrant families to the US, the challenges and hardships that relocation to a new country and a new culture present, and how these things can inform the roles immigrants play in our community. For immigrants already here, the book also subtly acknowledges their journeys to the US and illustrates a people and culture with whom they too may not be familiar. For those who arrived as young children, this memoir can open their eyes to experiences their parents and grandparents may have encountered and which they may not be aware of, giving them a fuller understanding of why their elders think and behave as they do.

This book provides an opening for Write Out Loud to bring programming into as yet unexplored San Diego neighborhoods with significant numbers of immigrant residents, through new partnerships with the Buddhist Temple of San Diego, Vietnamese Federation of San Diego, San Diego Asian Film Festival and hopefully more.

The community-wide writing contest will focus on memoirs, and through the writing workshops we will help people write their own memoir, producing stories from where we live, to be shared with the larger community.

## Book Title

Thi Bui, The Best We Could Do

## Requested Amount

What is the grant amount you're seeking? Please refer to the application guidelines for minimum/maximum limits. This field will automatically round to the nearest \$10 increment.

\$20,000

## Proposed number of partner organizations

8

## Proposed number of book discussions

Must be at least 3

4

## Proposed total number of events (including book discussions)

61

## Anticipated adults served

An estimate of individuals 18 and older to be served by the project.

700

## Anticipated youths served

An estimate of individuals 17 and younger to be served by the project.

4000

## Anticipated total participants

This will auto-calculate based on your responses above and after you click the "Save" button.

4700

## Organization description narrative

Briefly describe your organization's history and achievements.

Write Out Loud was born from a love of literature and a desire to share that passion with the community. A small organization with a big impact, WOL provides a variety of literature-based programs, 80% offered free to the community, including: KAMISHIBAI (Japanese storytelling form presenting international folktales and Japanese incarceration stories in libraries and classrooms); READ IMAGINE CREATE (providing free books and workshops for teens, inspiring their personal expression of the book since 2011); POETRY OUT LOUD (county coordinator for national poetry recitation competition since 2014); RIPPLES FROM WALDEN POND (one-man play about Henry David Thoreau in schools and libraries since 2017); LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD (youth poetry writing initiative since 2021, including poetry workshops, poetry displayed in area businesses and libraries, and a digital magazine of student poems); STORIES FOR SENIORS (literature read aloud to seniors in assisted living, memory care and senior centers since 2011); TWAINFEST (19th Century literary festival each August since 2010). Ticketed events include: our founding program, STORY CONCERTS (live performances of short stories and poetry, since 2007); and POEFEST (fully staged interactive performances of literature of the macabre each October, since 2018). Achievements include: Writing and illustrating two original Japanese Incarceration stories, based on real-life experiences of San Diego Japanese Americans; producing a day-long Roald Dahl Centenary event at the invitation of the Roald Dahl estate; producing LISTEN TO THIS (recording and distributing short stories and poetry during the Covid lock-down, each day from March 2019 - July 2022); producing the first World Kamishibai Forum (2020-current), providing Kamishibai workshops and webinars, featuring 41 Kamishibai artists from 10 countries to over 400 people from 45 countries, creating a network of Kamishibai enthusiasts to spread this unique storytelling form across the globe.

## Programming description

1. Describe your programming plans in detail, including types of activities, locations, and dates. Be sure that your plans meet the minimum project requirements outlined in the [guidelines](#).
2. Explain how your program will distribute copies of your chosen NEA Big Read book and optional companion title(s).
3. Describe your organization's efforts to further diversity, equity, inclusion, and access as it relates to audiences for your proposed project.

1. A kick-off event (book giveaway/writing contest announcement) for the broad community will take place in October 2024 at San Diego Central Library (a long-time partner). An immigrant-focused film (title and location TBD) in partnership with San Diego Asian Film Festival will be shown in November 2024 followed by a Q & A and will include a second book give-away. Visual art/graphic novel & writing workshops for ages 9 - adult will be provided in library branches and classrooms across the county in January 2025. A memoir writing workshop will be presented in February 2025 at San Diego Writers INK.

April 2025 activities include: writing contest winners presented at San Diego Writers INK; Student Awards Celebration and Presentation of literary, media & performance art inspired by the book at San Diego Central Library; book-inspired visual art displayed in a minimum of three San Diego library branches; discussions of the book at The Book Catapult and Buddhist Temple of San Diego; a STORY CONCERT - reading aloud short stories and poetry about immigration, displacement, and tolerance will be presented at Old Town Theatre; 15 readings of immigrant stories and two discussions of the book at assisted living residences. The above programs and books will be provided free to the community except the Film Screening and the Story Concert, which are ticketed events.

2. With the help of our educational partners, 2,700 copies of THE BEST WE COULD BE by Thi Bui (including alternative MEXIKID by Pedro Martin for middle grades) will be distributed to students via area school districts beginning in October 2024. A community-wide book giveaway for adults (the program's launch event) will take place in October 2024 at San Diego Central Library and more copies will be given away at the SD Asian Film Festival screening and at two senior assisted living residences (300 additional books).

3. Through the variety and breadth of its programming, Write Out Loud encourages equitable access, opportunities for participation, and resources for traditionally underrepresented communities. These include adults and children living and attending school in ethnically diverse neighborhoods; seniors living in assisted living facilities; economically disadvantaged neighborhood residents, and middle and high school students. While students may not typically be considered members of an underrepresented community, pre-teens/teenagers have few opportunities to express themselves and see how their own creativity and voice might shape their future life. Selecting schools, libraries and senior venues in such neighborhoods for the NEA BIG READ – WHERE WE LIVE, will enhance diversity, equity and inclusion for this project.

THE BEST WE COULD BE offers a new perspective of people and cultures we may not understand or who seem "other" to us. It provides information about the devastating events that may have brought immigrant families to the US, the challenges and hardships that relocation to a new country and culture can present, and how these things can inform the roles immigrants play in our community.

#### Accessibility narrative

Please describe how you will make your proposed activities accessible to people with disabilities.

Write Out Loud (WOL) is a small organization with a limited budget. We will: hire real-time American Sign Language interpreters for appropriate in-person and live-streamed presentation events; add automatic subtitles that are available post-production for the recorded presentation events; provide virtual workshops for homebound participants; provide sign language interpreters for book discussions upon request. All venues are ADA compliant.

## Project partnerships narrative

1. Describe your partnerships with libraries (as applicable) and community organizations.
2. Explain the role each partner will play in your program, the activities each partner will undertake with your organization, and whether these partnerships are confirmed or pending.
3. Explain how your partnerships will allow you to reach your intended audience(s) and engage individuals of diverse backgrounds and ability levels.

1. Write Out Loud has been partnering with the San Diego Public Library on a regular basis for a variety of projects since 2010, when we were awarded our first NEA BIG READ grant. Both the city and county library systems have proven to be excellent partners for hosting events on an in-kind basis and disseminating information. San Diego Public Library has also hired WOL as readers for their own events. San Diego Writers Ink has partnered with WOL many times on writing contests, hosting events and assisting our annual literary festival, TwainFest. Both the San Diego Unified School District and the San Diego County Office of Education have been invaluable partners in disseminating information about our educational programs and assuring educators of the value and quality of the programs WOL provides. The Book Catapult has been partnering with WOL for five years, procuring deeply discounted books and hosting in-store events. New partners for this project include: San Diego Asian Film Festival, the Buddhist Temple of San Diego, Vietnamese Federation of San Diego and Jewish Family Services.

2. Information about this free program will be promoted through our confirmed partnerships with the San Diego County Office of Education, who also oversees Juvenile Court Schools and will open doors to those students/classrooms, and San Diego Unified School District, disseminating program information to VAPA and Language Arts educators; our strong relationships with both SD City and County Library systems enable us to conduct workshops, display student art, host discussions and communicate information about the program at various branches, especially those with significant immigrant populations; the Student Awards and Presentation event will be hosted by San Diego Central Library; San Diego Writers INK will conduct a memoir writing contest, and subsequent winners' presentation as well as host a graphic novel workshop; The Book Catapult will procure deeply discounted copies of the books and host a book discussion. A new confirmed partnership with San Diego Asian Film Festival will host a book give-away and screening of a TBD immigrant focused film. We expect pending new partners – Buddhist Temple of San Diego, Vietnamese Federation of San Diego, and Jewish Family Services to help us reach various immigrant communities with book discussions and book giveaways, tied to distributing information about resources they and others offer to help and support immigrants.

3. Educational and library partners reach every part of the county, serving all ethnic and socio-economic groups. These partners promote free activities for all ages and encourage all individuals to participate. Our long history with library branches and schools in underserved neighborhoods increases the number of these people who are exposed to the literature, workshops and other activities Write Out Loud provides. Library branches identified as serving large immigrant communities including Hispanic, Asian, African and Middle Eastern will help us engage with the immigrant populations they serve. New

partnerships listed above, with ties to the Asian immigrant community, will help identify appropriate activities for their constituents, disseminate program information and encourage participation, broadly expanding the reach of Write Out Loud.

#### Describe the community your program impacts

Please describe the community you plan to reach with your programming.

Through its variety of literature-based programs, Write Out Loud works in many areas of the San Diego region, home to diverse communities and neighborhoods. While our programs serve youth, adults, seniors, and residents and visitors from all walks of life. WHERE WE LIVE will focus on ethnically diverse young people, primarily in underserved neighborhoods, made possible by partnerships with public schools, library branches, and other partners throughout San Diego County. Write Out Loud will also bring programs to the elderly, particularly those in residences for low-income seniors, or in assisted living facilities, and those who take advantage of services offered at neighborhood Senior Community Centers. We will reach other adults taking advantage of library programs of all kinds, as well as the broad community of citizens frequenting bookstores, coffee shops, etc.

#### Underserved audience

Please indicate the underserved audience you hope to reach.

- ☒ Black
- ☒ Indigenous
- ☒ POC
- ☒ Disability
- ☒ Seniors
- ☒ LGBTQIA
- ☒ Rural
- ☒ Veterans
- ☐ None of the above



## Underserved narrative

Please provide any details about the underserved audience(s) served through this project.

Write Out Loud regularly serves economically and socially marginalized communities. Immigrant families, a population we have served on occasion, but not specifically targeted, often have language barriers that keep them from seeking and/or experiencing literature-based opportunities. WOL will endeavor to provide translators when appropriate, to enable more language learners to participate. As all but two of the NEA BIG READ events are offered free to the community, economic restrictions do not hinder attendance. NEA BIG READ – WHERE WE LIVE will continue to solicit participants and audiences from all sectors of our region, while focusing on neighborhoods where immigrant families reside, including but not limited to those near our border with Mexico, where many low-income/high immigrant neighborhoods are located.

## Relevant biographies

Provide brief biographies of artists, staff, and/or personnel leading or involved in your project.

Project Director – Veronica Murphy, Co-Founder & Artistic Director (WOL). Ms. Murphy will oversee the planning, implementation and outreach of the project, including managing partnerships, overseeing Education Coordinator and teaching artists. Ms. Murphy has overseen seven BIG READ initiatives and 14 literary festivals. She has worked professionally as a performer, costume designer and development director.

Education Coordinator – Rachael Van Wormer – Education Coordinator (WOL). In addition to teaching writing workshops, Ms. Van Wormer will coordinate with schools, libraries, and other sites where workshops will be held. An actor, director, teaching artist and playwright, she has a degree in comparative literature and is fluent in Spanish.

## PARTNERS

Emily Derry – Youth & Engagement Coordinator San Diego Public Library – Ms. Derry been working with youth in libraries for 12 years and currently leads several citywide literacy programs. She will coordinate information dissemination and arrange workshops and book discussions through branch librarians, as well as secure the Student Awards/Presentation event venue.

Pauline Crooks - San Diego County Office of Education, VAPA Coordinator. Pauline earned degrees from Ohio State University, National University, and Concordia University. She is a National Board Certified Teacher and has been a music educator for 30 years. A long time WOL partner, she will disseminate information to all county schools, provide information about schools immigrant demographics and assure the reliability of WOL programs to educators.

Kristen Fogle – Executive Director, San Diego Writers, INK – Editor of several Short Story and Poetry anthologies, published author, writer of online and print media. Ms Fogle will coordinate the writing contest and disseminate information about NEA BIG READ San Diego activities and events.

Alex Villafuerte - Executive Director of Pacific Arts Movement – presenters of SD Asian Film Festival. Mr. Villafuerte, a Filipino-American community organizer since 2016 through Asian Business Association, San Diego Pride, SD Asian Pacific Islander Coalition advocates for the rights of and building capacity of marginalized, intersectional communities. He has a BA in Economics from San Diego State University. He will select the film for screening, arrange an appropriate speaker for the Q & A, and disseminate information about the film event and all other NEA BIG READ activities.

## Budget

Expense Description	Paid by Grant	Paid by Applicant	Paid by 3rd Party	In-kind	Total Match
Coordinator: Admin, Scheduling, school coordination, etc. 100 hrs @ \$25 = 2500	\$1,000.00	\$1,500.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,500.00
Actors: Award event & Senior Readings 2@125=\$250; 15@100=\$1500	\$400.00	\$1,350.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,350.00
Graphic Designer: posters, programs, signage, etc. 35 hrs@50=\$1750	\$1,000.00	\$250.00	\$500.00	\$0.00	\$750.00
Teaching Artists: School/Library/ Other wkshps- 33@75=\$2475	\$1,300.00	\$575.00	\$600.00	\$0.00	\$1,175.00
Translators: 3 events@150= \$450	\$0.00	\$450.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$450.00
Volunteers: adjudication, data entry, ushers, misc. 60 hrs@\$17=\$1020	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,020.00	\$1,020.00
Photographers/ Library staff; Photos 3 events@300=\$ 900; Lib staff 30 hrs @20=\$600=\$15 00	\$300.00	\$600.00	\$0.00	\$600.00	\$1,200.00

Technicians: Sound & Streaming Student event \$1000; other events 5hrs@\$40=\$200 0 = \$1200	\$0.00	\$200.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$1,200.00
Discussion Leaders/Speak er: Disc. Leaders 4@\$150=\$600; Speaker \$200 = \$800	\$600.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$200.00	\$200.00
Artistic & Exec. Director: 20% of \$35K=\$7000 & 10% of \$35K=\$3,500	\$2,000.00	\$8,500.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$8,500.00
ASL Interpreter: 5 hrs@\$40/hour= \$200	\$200.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Big Read book: 3000 copies@ \$11 = \$33,000	\$13,000.00	\$4,000.00	\$16,000.00	\$0.00	\$20,000.00
Library Venues: Aud. \$1400x2=\$2800; 5 wkshp/disc.Co mmunity rooms@150=\$ 750 = \$3550	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$3,550.00	\$3,550.00
Other Venues: Writers INK, 2@\$200 = \$400	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$400.00	\$400.00

Supplies: wrkshp art supplies \$500; Art installation supplies \$150	\$0.00	\$650.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$650.00
Printing: event programs; student certificates; signage	\$0.00	\$500.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$500.00
Overhead: phone/internet/ paper/ink/webs ite mgmt; postage; etc.	\$0.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,000.00
PR: 10% of \$7200	\$0.00	\$720.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$720.00
Promotional printing: Postcards, posters	\$200.00	\$400.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$400.00
<b>Total Project Expenses:</b>	<b>\$20,000.00</b>	<b>\$20,695.00</b>	<b>\$18,100.00</b>	<b>\$5,770.00</b>	<b>\$44,565.00</b>

Use this space to offer more detail about your budget

## Supporting Documentation

### Supporting documentation

Upload relevant information. Click Browse Files to get started.

[WOL\\_BigRead\\_Poster.pdf](#)

972.2 KB - 01/24/2024 6:09 PM

[WOL\\_SDPLSupportLetter\\_BigRead-Best\\_We\\_Could\\_Do\\_by\\_Thi\\_Bui\\_0124.pdf](#)

288.5 KB - 01/24/2024 6:07 PM

Total Files: 2

### Certify

I certify on behalf of my organization that the information provided in this application is true to the best of my knowledge. Furthermore, I certify that:

- My organization is eligible to receive federal funds and not delinquent in the repayment of Federal debt.
- My organization is a unit/division of government, a Federally-recognized tribal government, an institution of higher education, or a 501c3 nonprofit.
- My proposed activity space(s) are accessible to people with disabilities.
- My project budget does not include match from another federal source.
- My organization does not discriminate on the grounds of race, color, or national origin (including limited English proficiency), in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended (42 U.S.C. 2000d et seq.); on the basis of age, in accordance with the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (42 U.S.C. 6101 et seq.); on the basis of sex, in any education program or activity, in accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. 1681 et seq.).

☒ I certify