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Literary Arts Fund

LITERARY ARTS FUND AWARDS \$7.7 MILLION TO 40 ORGANIZATIONS AND PUBLISHERS NATIONWIDE

Initiative targets chronic underfunding of literature, directing unrestricted support to literary arts nonprofits serving writers and readers across the U.S.

New York, NY (June 4, 2026)—The Literary Arts Fund announced today \$7.7 million in inaugural unrestricted general operating grants to 40 literary arts organizations and publishers spanning 19 states, from Alaska to Florida, that help champion writers and reading, and the essential contributions both make to our culture, communities, and lives. The recipients, which organize local book festivals, present readings and conversations with authors, host writing workshops, offer writers’ retreats and residencies, and are responsible for a vast amount of poetry and works in translation published each year, play a critical role in sustaining literary culture yet operate within the most underfunded artistic discipline in the nation.

Launched in October 2025, the Literary Arts Fund was initiated by the Mellon Foundation as a collaborative effort with the Ford Foundation, Hawthornden Foundation, Lannan Foundation, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Poetry Foundation, and an anonymous foundation, prompted by the finding that the literary arts are the least supported artistic discipline in the U.S. According to research the Fund conducted using the nonprofit database Candid, startlingly, just 1.9% of the \$5 billion contributed by private foundations to arts and culture in 2023 went toward literature and writing, a fact that has been consistently true for the previous five years. The Fund aims to catalyze new and increased support for the nonprofit literary arts field, which uniquely assists creative writers, by providing at least \$50 million over the next five years.

“Without the support of literary arts nonprofits, I would never have been able to survive as a young writer and become the published author I am today,” **said Julia Alvarez, award-winning author of *How the García Girls Lost Their Accents***. “Our arts are not window dressing—they are vital to the nourishment of the soul of a nation. Now as we mark the 250th year of this country, the best birthday gift we can give to ourselves and each other is to ensure that our literary arts nonprofits are well endowed with our cash and our *cariño*. These opportunities must be passed on to the next generations of writers on behalf of all of us.”

“Writers give voice to the human condition, helping us better understand ourselves and each other,” said **Jen Benka, Executive Director of the Literary Arts Fund**. “And central to millions of readers having access to their stories and poems are literary arts nonprofits, which work tirelessly to ensure literature continues to have a vital presence in our culture. As these organizations and publishers face a lack of funding, we encourage leaders who value literature to join us in supporting writers, books, and reading.”

In the past year alone, according to data collected in the Fund’s grant application process, the 40 inaugural grant awardees—more than half of which have annual budgets below \$1,000,000—supported upwards of 10,000 individual authors of creative nonfiction, fiction, and poetry through their programs and publications. They presented 5,909 writers at events, hosted 590 writers at residencies, awarded 421 writers financial prizes, and published 2,141 writers in books and literary magazines, among other activities—reaching over 9,000,000 readers and audience members in person and online. The awardees range from longstanding, venerable institutions that were founded in the early seventies to groundbreaking organizations established as recently as 2020.

The Literary Arts Fund’s 2026 general operating grant awardees are:

Brooklyn Book Festival (Brooklyn, NY)
Cave Canem (New York, NY)
Center for the Art of Translation (San Francisco, CA)
Charlotte Lit (Charlotte, NC)
Chicago Poetry Center (Chicago, IL)
City of Asylum/Detroit (Detroit, MI)
CityLit Project (Baltimore, MD)
Copper Canyon Press (Port Townsend, WA)
Deep Vellum Publishing (Dallas, TX)
Gemini Ink (San Antonio, TX)
Graywolf Press (Minneapolis, MN)
Hub City Press (Spartanburg, SC)
Indigenous Nations Poets (Burlington, WI)
Just Buffalo Literary Center (Buffalo, NY)
Kimbilio (Saint Louis, MO)
Kweli Journal (New York, NY)
Lighthouse Writers Workshop (Denver, CO)
Literary Arts (Portland, OR)
Literary Cleveland (Cleveland, OH)
The Loft Literary Center (Minneapolis, MN)
Los Angeles Review of Books (Los Angeles, CA)
Minnesota Prison Writing Workshop (St. Paul, MN)
Kaya Press (Los Angeles, CA)
n+1 (Brooklyn, NY)
National Book Foundation (New York, NY)
Nightboat Books (Brooklyn, NY)

Noemi Press (Tucson, AZ)
North Carolina Writers' Network (Winston-Salem, NC)
Nuyorican Poets Cafe (New York, NY)
O, Miami (Miami, FL)
The PEN/Faulkner Foundation (Washington, D.C.)
Poets House (New York, NY)
Sarabande Books (Louisville, KY)
Small Press Traffic (San Francisco, CA)
Storyknife Writers Retreat (Homer, AK)
Torch Literary Arts (Austin, TX)
Transit Books (Berkeley, CA)
The Watering Hole Poetry Organization (Greenville, SC)
Woodland Pattern (Milwaukee, WI)
Words Without Borders (Brooklyn, New York)

The 40 recipients were selected through a competitive open call process, with applications reviewed by panels of writers from across the country representing diverse genres and perspectives.

The Literary Arts Fund will open its next grant opportunity—which will support new, one-time, innovative projects—on June 8, 2026; full guidelines will be posted then. The deadline for this opportunity will be August 17, 2026 at 11:59 p.m. ET. The Fund will hold an information session about the innovation project grant program and application form on June 18, 2026; [registration is free](#). For more information, visit literaryartsfund.org and [subscribe to the Fund's newsletter](#).

In addition to the Literary Arts Fund's seven founders, the contributing members of the Literary Arts Funders Collaborative—which currently include the Adrian Brinkerhoff Poetry Fund of the Sidney E. Frank Foundation, Barr Foundation, Barbara and Amos Hostetter, Houston Endowment, Jerome Foundation, and McKnight Foundation—make the Fund's grant programs possible. Each foundation made a one-time gift on top of its own grantmaking budget. The Fund continues to accept contributions in support of its efforts, and grantmakers interested in more information about the Literary Arts Funders Collaborative may contact LAFC@literaryartsfund.org.

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About the Literary Arts Fund

The Literary Arts Fund, a fiscally sponsored project of the National Center for Civic Innovation, is a concerted national effort to support the nonprofit literary arts in the United States, the most under-resourced artistic discipline in the country. Launched in 2025, the Fund aims to provide at least \$50 million to bolster nonprofit publishers, presenters, and organizations that directly support creative writers and strengthen their relationship to readers. It will also raise the visibility of the nonprofit literary arts field, including through the release of data and reports. The Fund was initiated by the Mellon Foundation as a collaborative effort with the Ford

Foundation, Hawthornden Foundation, Lannan Foundation, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Poetry Foundation, and an anonymous foundation. Grantmakers are invited and encouraged to join in championing literature and writers by becoming a part of the Literary Arts Funders Collaborative, a new philanthropic affinity group.