



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

**County Board Agenda Item
Meeting of July 7, 2007**

DATE: June 22, 2007

SUBJECT: Grant Award – The Big Read Initiative from the National Endowment for the Arts.

C. M. RECOMMENDATION:

1. Authorize the County Manager to accept \$18,000 in Federal Funds from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and Arts Midwest from to support Arlington's participation in the Big Read national literacy initiative.
2. Appropriate \$18,000 in grant funds (101.374913) in Federal Funds from the NEA and Arts Midwest to the Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources (PRCR) (101.86001).

ISSUES: None

SUMMARY: The Big Read is an initiative of the NEA designed to revitalize the role of literature in American popular culture and bring the transformative power of literature into the lives of its citizens. The Big Read brings together partners across the country to chose a classic literary work and then to encourage citizens to participate and to read the book. To this end, during the months of September and October of 2007, staff will implement arts and literary programming in Arlington to promote the reading and understanding of Rudolfo Anaya's classic novel, *Bless Me Ultima*.

BACKGROUND: This is the sixth time the Cultural Affairs Division of PRCR has requested funding from the NEA for programs that recognize and expand art and cultural opportunities in the County, especially those that include diverse populations and diverse cultural viewpoints. Most recent award is in Fiscal Year (FY) 2007 for \$20,000. Cumulatively, since FY 2000, PRCR has been awarded \$153,000 from the NEA.

DISCUSSION: Through the Big Read, PRCR and Libraries will reach diverse audiences through reading groups, book giveaways, and discussion sessions, as well through theatrical, visual and performing arts. All of these efforts will introduce Rudolfo Anaya's novel of New Mexico's Chicano culture to both English and Spanish readers within the County.

County Manager: _____

County Attorney: _____

Staff: Mary Briggs, Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources

FISCAL IMPACT: Both FY 2008 expenses and revenues will increase by \$18,000. The County will provide in-kind matching funds from PRCR's Cultural Development FY 2008 budget.