



# COUNTY OF ORANGE

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## **OC PUBLIC LIBRARIES RECEIVES NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS BIG READ GRANT**

### ***Orange County to Read and Celebrate Lab Girl in the Spring of 2021***

**ORANGE COUNTY, Calif.** (June 25, 2020) — OC Public Libraries has been one of two Orange County organizations chosen to receive a grant of \$15,000 to host the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Big Read. *Lab Girl* by Hope Jahren was selected to be the focal read for Orange County, and activities will take place in Spring of 2021.

“The County is grateful to be chosen again for the NEA Big Read grant and looks forward to OC Public Libraries providing quality programs with this year’s award,” said Chairwoman Michelle Steel, Second District Supervisor.

The NEA Big Read offers a range of titles reflecting many different voices and perspectives, with an aim to inspire conversation and discovery. OC Public Libraries selected *Lab Girl* for its focus on the sciences. Program offerings will include Science Technology Engineering Arts Math (S.T.E.A.M.) activities, guest speakers, and other engaging offerings that keep library users connected with *Lab Girl*.

“Libraries are a vital resource to our communities. This award aligns with the county’s goal of extending and promoting equal access to every community, including in the arts,” said Vice Chairman Andrew Do, First District Supervisor.

In partnership with Arts Midwest, the NEA Big Read is an Arts Endowment initiative aiming to broaden the public’s understanding of our world, our communities, and ourselves through the joy of sharing a good book. The purpose of the NEA Big Read grant is to help institutions connect readers to their communities by selecting a book and exploring its theme, topics, and common threads.

“We are grateful for the award, which will further supports connecting our community,” said Supervisor Donald Wagner, Third District.

Since 2006, the National Endowment for the Arts has funded more than 1,600 NEA Big Read programs, providing more than \$22 million to organizations nationwide. More than 5.7 million Americans have attended an NEA Big Read event, approximately 91,000 volunteers have participated at the local level, and 39,000 community organizations have partnered to make NEA Big Read activities possible.

“Through this grant, the County can further OC Public Libraries’ mission of building lifelong learners while inviting curiosity, discovery, and exploration,” said Supervisor Doug Chaffee, Fourth District.



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“The County looks forward to bringing a community reading program that supports arts learning and celebrates America’s rich and diverse cultural heritage,” said Supervisor Lisa Bartlett, Fifth District.

For more information on Orange County’s NEA Big Read program or for updates on OC Public Libraries, visit [ocpl.org](http://ocpl.org).

For more information about the NEA Big Read, including book and author information, podcasts, and videos, visit [arts.gov/neabigread](http://arts.gov/neabigread).

*Established by Congress in 1965, the **National Endowment for the Arts** is the independent federal agency whose funding and support gives Americans the opportunity to participate in the arts, exercise their imaginations, and develop their creative capacities. Through partnerships with state arts agencies, local leaders, other federal agencies, and the philanthropic sector, the Arts Endowment supports arts learning, affirms and celebrates America’s rich and diverse cultural heritage, and extends its work to promote equal access to the arts in every community across America. Visit [arts.gov](http://arts.gov) to learn more.*

***Arts Midwest** promotes creativity, nurtures cultural leadership, and engages people in meaningful arts experiences, bringing vitality to Midwest communities and enriching people’s lives. Based in Minneapolis, Arts Midwest connects the arts to audiences throughout the nine-state region of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. One of six non-profit regional arts organizations in the United States, Arts Midwest’s history spans more than 35 years. For more information, please visit [artsmidwest.org](http://artsmidwest.org).*

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