



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **IRVING WINS BIG READ GRANT FOR SEVENTH STRAIGHT YEAR** **Free books, free events celebrate “To Kill a Mockingbird” in 2014**

**(IRVING, TEXAS)** — The National Endowment for the Arts awarded the Irving Public Library a \$17,000 grant from the Big Read program, making it the seventh consecutive year that Big Read gives a grant to Irving libraries. The Irving Public Library is one of 77 organizations nationwide to receive the award, which will be used to purchase books and host events in celebration of the Big Read this fall.

Each year, the Big Read provides communities across the nation with the opportunity to read and discuss a single book. This October, the library and partners will be celebrating Harper Lee’s “To Kill a Mockingbird.” The book was selected from a pool of 36 titles which are sponsored by the Big Read program.

“This is the power of great literature, when a book can stir a nation’s conscience so poignantly,” said Jan Bodnar, the library’s Big Read program coordinator. “It is a privilege to present such an esteemed work and celebrate its legacy fifty years after its publication.”

The library and Irving ISD also selected “The Washingtons Go to Birmingham – 1963” by Christopher Paul Curtis and “Sneetches and Other Stories” by Dr. Seuss to serve as companion titles for children. Copies of the books will be given away as part of the program at libraries and partner locations.

Community partners and sponsors, such as Irving Independent School District, National Scouting Museum, Irving Heritage Society, Irving’s Parks and Recreation Department and the Irving Black Arts Council, contribute to the program’s success. This is the ninth year that Irving Public Library will host a community-wide reading initiative.

The Big Read is a program of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with Arts Midwest. For more, visit [neabigread.org](http://neabigread.org). For sponsorship opportunities, contact Jan Bodnar at (972) 721-3502.

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About the [City of Irving](http://CityofIrving.org)

Irving is the second city in the nation and the first in the State of Texas to receive the [Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award](#) (2012) as well as the first municipality in Texas' history to receive the [Texas Award for Performance Excellence](#) (2011). Irving is the 13th largest city in the state with 227,000 residents and is home to the largest office park in North Texas, where more than 10 percent of Fortune 500 companies are headquartered or have a significant presence.