

## **CREF Ways & Means Committee “Road Show” Talking Points April 8, 2023**

**Introduction:** Good morning and thank you for creating space for our community to advocate for Senate Bill 5506 and the Cultural Resource Economic Fund. My name is Andrew Proctor, and I am the Executive Director at Literary Arts.

**Background:** Founded in 1984, Literary Arts is a community-based nonprofit literary center in Portland serving Oregon readers and writers of all ages, demographics, and socio-economic standings. We provide 40,000 in-person arts experiences -- including reaching 4,000 youth each year -- and empower Oregonians to tell their own story by supporting writers and teaching writing to hundreds of adults with low cost workshops as well as reaching as many as a half a million radio listeners each year across the state. This level of accessibility is common among the applicants included on the CREF slate.

**Need:** Arts and Culture organizations across the state need investment to create space to serve Oregonians. Literary Arts has currently outgrown its rented space, once again, and this is limiting our ability to serve Oregonians, at a moment when access to the arts is a crucial part of our social recovery from the pandemic.

**Request:** Along with 15 other Arts and Culture projects seeking capital funding, Literary Arts respectfully requests you to support the CREF ask of \$11.8M in funding. Our project includes the purchase and renovation of a new organizational headquarters at 716 SE Grand on Portland’s East side. This support will increase institutional stability and allow us to focus on our service to our community, not our infrastructure.

This new, 14,000 square-foot cultural and community center in the inner industrial eastside of Portland’s downtown core will expand our community reach, anchor our work, and increase our visibility—we’ll have the capacity to welcome more people annually from all walks of life, host more literary and humanities programs, and deepen engagement.

Arts & Culture organizations are essential to the fabric of our community. A multi-year longitudinal study by the University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy and Practice shows **in lower-income neighborhoods, cultural resources are “significantly” linked to better health, schooling, and security.** The research, which was controlled for economic wellbeing, race, and ethnicity, found the presence of cultural resources is associated with:

- A 14% decrease in cases of child abuse and neglect
- A 5% decrease in obesity
- An 18% increase in kids scoring in the top stratum on English and math exams
- An 18% decrease in the serious crime rate

As we discuss public health and safety, the arts can play a vital role in our recovery. We are confident that the \$11.8M total requested as part of the CREF slate will support well-developed and viable projects that are working to increase access to programming and resources across Oregon.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.