



**Texas  
Book  
Festival**

**2021 ANNUAL REPORT**

This River  
Here

## TEXAS BOOK FESTIVAL 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

Over here at the Texas Book Festival, we proudly embrace every book nerd stereotype assigned to us. Reading glasses? Check. Totebag collection? Check. But don't say book nerds can't also be jocks, as we demonstrated a Jackie Robinson-like prowess in hitting every curveball, fastball, and knuckleball 2021 decided to throw at us. With each challenge of the pandemic's second year, we responded with resolve and dead aim to deliver on our mission to connect readers with authors. What that meant was working extra hard to provide programming to people in the ways they wanted and needed. It meant producing our first-ever hybrid annual Festival, showcasing 215 authors including Amor Towles, Colson Whitehead, Maria Hinojosa, Emmanuel Acho, Rumaan Alam, and Tamron Hall across virtual, in-person, and live-streamed sessions. It meant asking each of our 26 Reading Rock Stars and Real Reads schools whether they needed us to bring authors to their students virtually or in person and customizing each visit for them. It meant allocating extra funds, a total of \$125,500, to our statewide Library Grants program to give extra support and love to our public libraries.

As you read through this annual report, we hope you can see the impact and joy that authors and books bring to our communities. The annual Festival and all of our school and community programs would not be possible without your involvement and support. Thank you for sharing our vision to inspire Texans of all ages to love reading.

Warm regards,



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lois".

Lois Kim  
*Executive Director*



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anna".

Anna Near  
*Board Chair*







## FESTIVAL IMPACT

In 2021, the Texas Book Festival presented a hybrid Festival, creating accessible, safe, and innovative opportunities for everyone to connect with authors. We kicked off the Festival on Saturday, October 23, with virtual children’s and YA programming, then continued with a full week of diverse adult programming. On Saturday, October 30, we presented children’s authors at Symphony Square, followed by the return of Lit Crawl Austin. In partnership with the Austin Public Library, the Texas Book Festival hosted more in-person programming at the Austin Central Library on Sunday, October 31, with Amor Towles, Christina Soontornvat, Maria Hinojosa, and more.

Throughout nine days of programming, the Festival featured Pulitzer Prize winners Colson Whitehead and Lawrence Wright; athlete and *New York Times* bestseller Emmanuel Acho; PEN/Faulker Award winner Benjamin Alire Sáenz; *Texas Monthly* Executive Editor Kathy Blackwell; former Texas Writer Award winners Sandra Cisneros and H.W. Brands, James Beard Foundation Book Award winners Adrian Miller and Joshua McFadden; and many, many more. The National Book Foundation, PEN America, the Whiting Awards, the Writers’ League of Texas, the Michener Center for Writers, *The Atlantic*, and the Austin Public Library participated in the Festival through programming and promotional partnerships.

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## 2021 FESTIVAL POSTER ARTIST



The 2021 Texas Book Festival poster artist was San Antonio-based artist Clemente Guzman. The selected piece, *Viva Texas Rivers!*, was also the cover of a book of essays by the same name from Texas A&M Press. Guzman's career embodies this love of Texas wildlife and nature, which seemed appropriate for 2021 as we sought solace in our beautiful state, as well as in books.

## FESTIVAL NUMBERS

### Festival Sessions:

- Teen = 13
- Adult = 64
- Kids = 29
- Lit Crawl = 6
- Total = 112
- 33 virtual exhibitors

### Author demographics:

- White/Caucasian: 48.5%
- Hispanic, Latinx, Tejano: 23.3%
- Black/African American: 13.2%
- Asian / Asian American: 6.9%
- Unanswered: 12.8%
- Native American, American Indian, or Indigenous: 2.3%
- South Asian: 3.2%
- Middle Eastern or North African: 1.4%
- Total: 110.5% [figure includes authors who identified as more than one ethnicity]
- LGBTQ+: 10.4%
- **215 authors**

## TEXAS WRITER AWARD



The Texas Writer Award is given each year to a writer in recognition of outstanding contributions to Texas letters and literary arts. The 2021 recipient was Don Tate, the author and/or illustrator of more than 80 books for young readers, including *Pigskins to Paintbrushes: The Story of Football-Playing Artist Ernie Barnes*, a featured book at the Festival this year. His work has garnered him numerous accolades, including Ezra Jack Keats and Christopher honors and awards, Texas Institute of Letters prizes, and inclusion in countless best-of lists. Don moved from Des Moines to Austin in 1999 to work at the *Austin American-Statesman* as a graphics reporter, and he has been involved with the Festival and Reading Rock Stars for nearly 20 years.

## SHIFT TO HYBRID

With the vaccine’s arrival, 2021 began with great promise. Familiar venues were consulted, enhanced health-and-safety measures were discussed, and the return of a big in-person Festival felt within reach. We would aim to keep programming primarily outdoors, and whereas most sessions would take place in-person, a substantive slate of virtual-only conversations was in the works too. That was the plan, in any case, our concept of a hybrid fall.

Meantime, however, we regularly checked the line charts and the dashboards, eyed the peaks and valleys in infections and hospitalizations. And the uncertainties brought by new variants ultimately steered us toward one option: hybrid would continue, but we would flip the script. Now most programming would be online, and in-person events would take place only in venues in which we could cap attendance and reasonably enforce Covid-safety measures.

As significant an undertaking as the late-summer pivot was, the re-coordination was swift. And two brilliant new venues for in-person programming were quickly secured: Waterloo Greenway’s Symphony Square for Saturday children’s programming, and Austin Central Library for Sunday adult sessions. At the Library, all sessions—Amor Towles, Maria Hinojosa, and Mary Gaitskill among them—were live-streamed, which enabled us to achieve for the first time a suite of conversations available immediately to audiences both local and around the world.

## TICKETED SESSIONS

While the vast majority of our programming is free, we continued to offer select ticketed author events to support authors through book sales and generate earned income for our nonprofit.

### Total attendance:

- R.J. Palacio
  - 78 total attendance
- Colson Whitehead
  - 105 total attendance





## LIT CRAWL



Lit Crawl Austin—supported by generous sponsors Tito’s Handmade Vodka and SUSTO mezcal—celebrated its eleventh anniversary this year. Nearly 200 registrations were logged for the hybrid program, with four outdoor, in-person events held at Symphony Square and Cheer Up Charlies and two online.

A community programming partnership was formed with The Stacks podcast, and many past programming partners returned, including American Short Fiction, Typewriter Tarot, Awst Press, and Austin Bat Cave. Featured authors included Gabriela Garcia (with Good Morning America Book Club Pick *Of Women and Salt*), Hala Alyan, poet Tomás Q. Morín, Austin-based authors Stacey Swann, Jenny Zhang, Dalia Azim, Sindya Bhanoo, and many more.

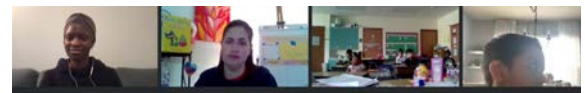
## YEAR-ROUND PROGRAMMING

We produced more than 15 virtual year-round sessions in 2021. In addition to an Austin Film Society co-presented session in August with Ethan Hawke, Greg Ruth, and filmmaker Richard Linklater, we revived our Instagram Live Literary Lunch Break conversation series to continue spotlighting critically acclaimed and recently published Texas authors.

We also added new life to our monthly book club by migrating it from a Facebook discussion to a robust program, which included seven live virtual sessions, one pre-recorded session, two archival conversations from Festival 2020, and an in-person session in partnership with *Texas Monthly*, Easy Tiger, and Twin Cities Trivia. Texas-local actor Gen Padalecki moderated two virtual book club sessions, one with National Book Award finalist Elizabeth McCracken and another with bestseller R. J. Palacio.

Additional authors in the year-round lineup included José Antonio Rodríguez, Francisco Cantú, P. Djèlí Clark, Justin Deabler, Carrie Fountain, Simon Han, Julia Heaberlin, Alex McElroy, Kelsey McKinney, Sajni Patel, Stacey Swann, Sergio Troncoso, S. Kirk Walsh, and Bryan Washington.





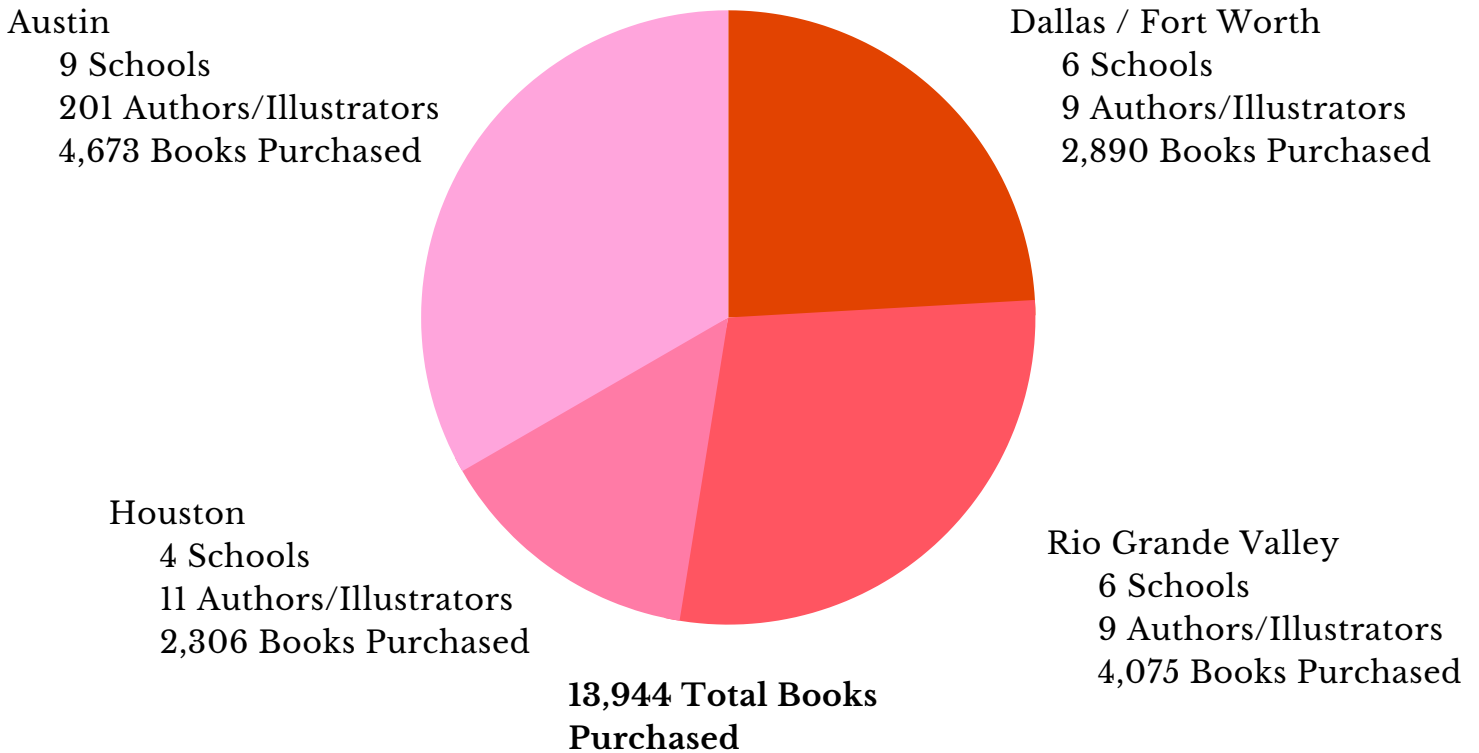
## READING ROCK STARS

Reading Rock Stars brings nationally recognized children’s authors and their books to students in Title I elementary schools around the state of Texas. TBF makes a three-year commitment to each school in the program, providing resources and a comprehensive curriculum guide so students can fully engage with the book and author. Since the program’s inception, we’ve given more than 143,000 brand new, hardcover books and hosted more than 630 author visits in Austin, Houston, Dallas, Fort Worth, and the Rio Grande Valley.

In the fall of 2021, Reading Rock Stars was able to move from completely virtual programming to a hybrid model. Of the nine schools that participated, three had virtual events and six shifted back to in-person Reading Rock Stars events. For many authors, their 2021 Reading Rock Stars author visit was their return to in-person school visits. Our core goals remained the same and we worked to create an interactive, engaging, relevant, and culturally sustaining experience for students while abiding closely to a new set of parameters at each campus.



## TEXAS BOOK FESTIVAL 2021 ANNUAL REPORT



## READING ROCK STARS (CONT.)

In 2021, 13,944 total books were given throughout Texas at Hurla Midkiff, Bryan, Guillermo Flores, E.B. Guerra, César Chávez, Dr. R.E. Margo, Wilson, Thompson, Harris, Magrill Primary, Frank Guzick, N.W. Harllee ECC, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Arts Academy, Bill J. Elliott, Meadowbrook, Van Zandt-Guinn, Harmony Science Academy, Austin Achieve, Newton-Collins, Uphaus ECC, Govalle, Pleasant Hill, J. Houston, Oak Springs, and Helping Hand Home.

2021 RRS authors included Isabel Quintero, Zeke Peña, Kelly Starling Lyons, Jarrett Pumphrey, Jerome Pumphrey, Cozbi A. Cabrera, Sili Recio, Don Tate, Monica A. Brown, Nicholas Solis, Gloria Amescua, Diana Lopez, Cathy Appelt, Chris Barton, Beatrice Zamora, Haven Iverson, Anne Wynter, Steven Weinberg, Jon Scieszka, K. A. Holt, Divya Srinivasan, Michael Genhart, Tracy Nelson Maurer, Varian Johnson, Christina Soontornvat, Bavu Blakes, Meghan P. Browne, David Bowles, Raul the Third, Lee Merrill Byrd, Anika Fajardo, Shanda McCloskey, Rebecca J. Gomez, and Elisa Chavarri.

Thank you to all our generous Reading Rock Stars supporters, including H-E-B Tournament of Champions, ECG Foundation, Wright Family Foundation, The Miles Foundation, The Thomas M Helen Mckee & John P Ryan Foundation, Sid. W. Richardson Foundation, UT Rio Grande Valley, and many individual donors.

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## REAL READS

In 2021, Real Reads programming included virtual events that provided teens with the opportunity to engage with acclaimed authors and their work. Through the program, 360 books were provided to students at Skyline High School, Austin Community College’s Ascender program, and Breakthrough Central Texas. Featured authors included former NASA astronaut Jose Hernandez, faculty member of the Yale Writers’ Workshop and current president of the Texas Institute of Letters Sergio Troncoso, and former NFL linebacker and television personality, Emmanuel Acho.

Thank you to all our Real Reads supporters, including the AT&T Foundation.



**Our Large Print Section Is Growing!**  
*And there have never been so many ways to enjoy them!*



Come into the library or browse our catalog online to see all the new titles that just arrived! Nearly 100 of these were made possible by the Texas Book Festival 2021 Collections Enhancement Grant.

[Browse Our Catalog](#)



## LIBRARY GRANTS

In 2021, we gave \$125,500 in collection enhancement grants to 53 libraries all over the state of Texas. Since 1995, we have awarded more than \$3.2 million in grants, bringing much-needed brand new books into communities, from large print adult books to nonfiction children's books and everything in between.

*The titles added to the collection have given a refreshing new look to our large print collection. When patrons arrive who typically check out large print books, they head straight to the new arrivals bin. Oftentimes you can catch multiple patrons at once browsing this bin. Popular genres for our seniors include mysteries, historical fiction and New York Times best sellers.*

**- librarian at Marble Falls Public Library**





## FIRST EDITION LITERARY GALA

The 2021 First Edition Literary Gala was held on Friday, February 11, 2022, after being postponed from October 29, 2021 due to concerns about COVID-19. Poet and author, Carrie Fountain, emceed a memorable night of literary programming for 475 guests. Featured authors included authors Noah Hawley, Chang-rae Lee, Elizabeth McCracken, and Don Tate. Thanks to Gala Co-Chairs Anna Hargrove and Dalton Young, Board Chair, Anna Near, and the Gala Committee, the event raised more than \$563,000 in ticket sales and sponsorships in 2021 and an additional \$258,000 in auction, paddles up, sponsorship, and 2022 ticket sales.



## FESTIVAL FRIENDS

Every year, the Texas Book Festival works hard to engage and grow the Festival Friend donor community (donations between \$100-\$500.) Thanks to the support of BookPeople and *Texas Monthly*, we were able to thank these donors with viewing access to ticketed sessions, BookPeople discounts, and annual subscriptions to *Texas Monthly* for donors who gave \$250 or more. We raised \$50,686 from 267 Festival Friends.

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## ENGAGING OUR COMMUNITY

The Texas Book Festival always seeks to reach people across the state of Texas and one way to do that is through digital communication. This year we continued to reach audiences across the country and internationally through our social media programming, including our Literary Lunch Break series on Instagram Live. Our book club group on Facebook is a designated hub for enriching discussions about our monthly book club picks with readers in the community and for featuring virtual conversations with the authors.

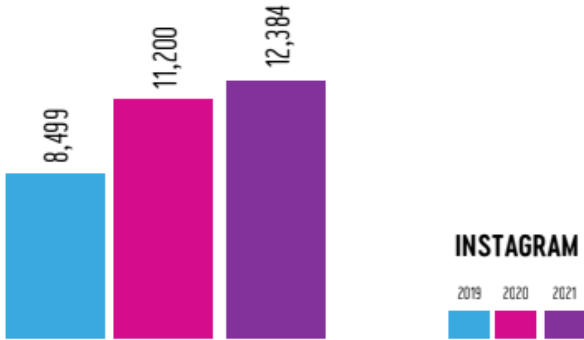
For the hybrid Festival, we used our social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter) to inform attendees about upcoming panels with daily schedules and reminder Instagram Stories before each session. Daily emails were also sent to showcase the day’s sessions.



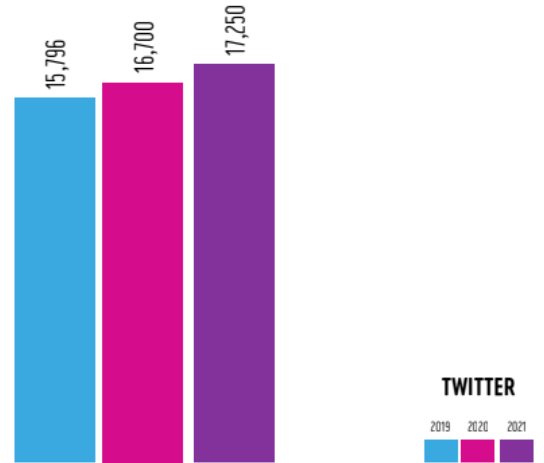


# ENGAGING OUR COMMUNITY

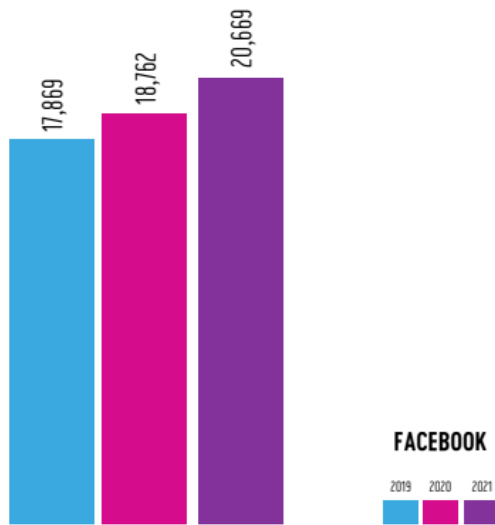
AUDIENCE GROWTH 2019-2021



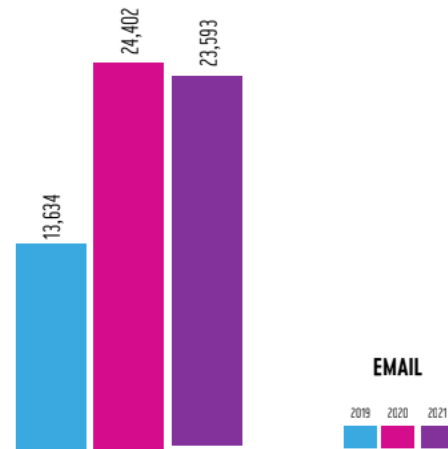
AUDIENCE GROWTH 2019-2021



AUDIENCE GROWTH 2019-2021



AUDIENCE GROWTH 2019-2021



## TOP FACEBOOK POSTS OF 2021



APRIL 12.97K



MAY 4.9K

## TOP INSTAGRAM POSTS OF 2021

texasbookfest



JULY 512 LIKES

texasbookfest



AUG 413 LIKES

texasbookfest GOOD NEWS! 📖 Here's a sneak peek of the 2021 hybrid #TXBookFest author lineup. We'd like to welcome Colson Whitehead, Elizabeth McCracken, Amor Towles, Sandra Cisneros, R.J. Palacio, and many more! Save the dates: Oct 25-28 (Virtual) + Oct 30-31 (Downtown Austin)!

See the link in our bio for the full post.

#texasbookfestival #bookfestival #austinevents #authorannouncement

Jul 21, 2021

texasbookfest Today's #FridayReads comes from @byjaneclair. Jane Claire Hervey is a creative strategist & accidental nonprofit founder of @futurefrontexas, living and working in Austin, TX.

She recommends FORGET THE ALAMO by Bryan Burrough, @christomlinson, and @jasonstanford. Swipe to read Jane's thoughts on the book. 📖

Mark your TBR lists AND calendars because @futurefrontexas is hosting their official reopening event. The Front Market and Festival takes place on Aug. 21 and 22. Full details at: <http://www.texasbookfestival.com>

Aug 13, 2021

## TOP TWITTER POSTS OF 2021



10:02 AM - Jul 21, 2021 - Hootsuite Inc.

View Tweet analytics

10 Retweets 1 Quote Tweet 23 Likes



10:02 AM - May 17, 2021 - LaterMedia

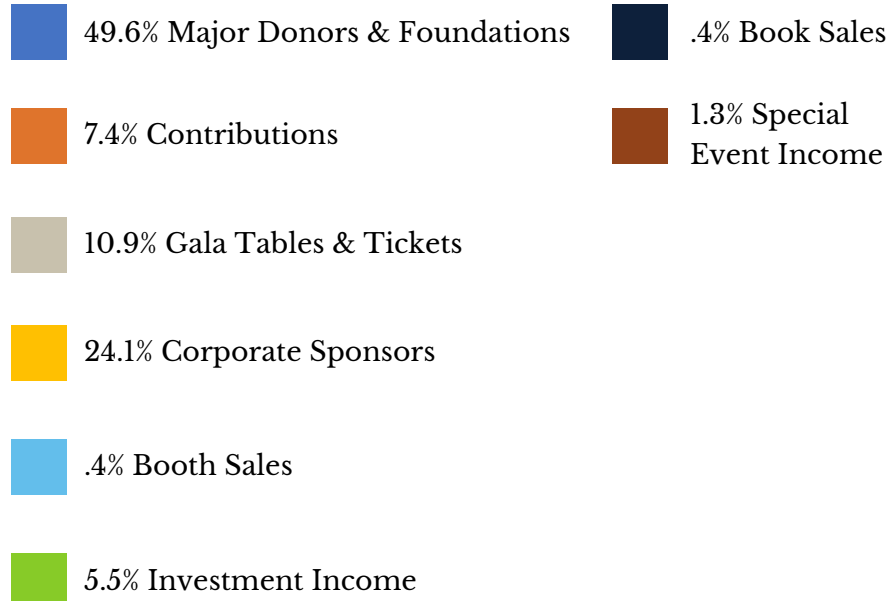
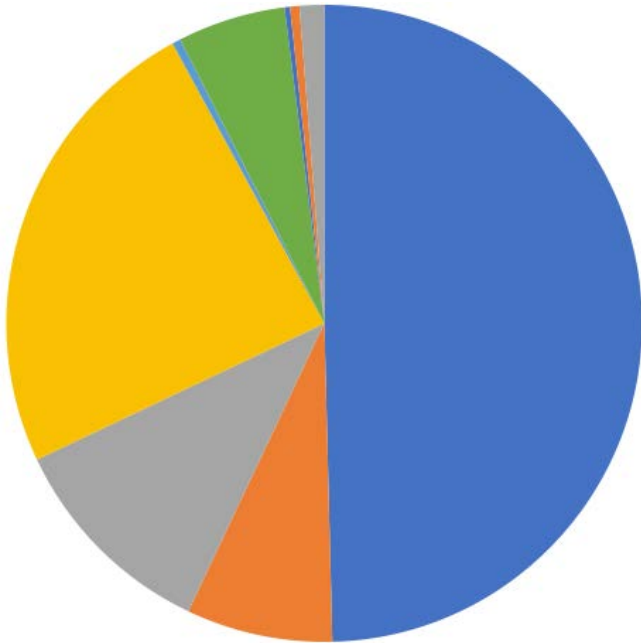
View Tweet analytics

39 Retweets 16 Quote Tweets 92 Likes

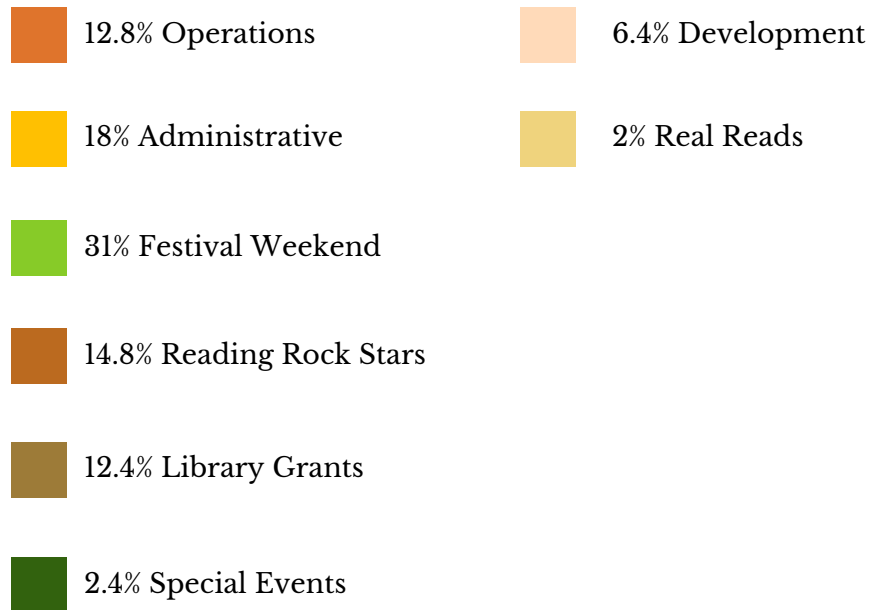
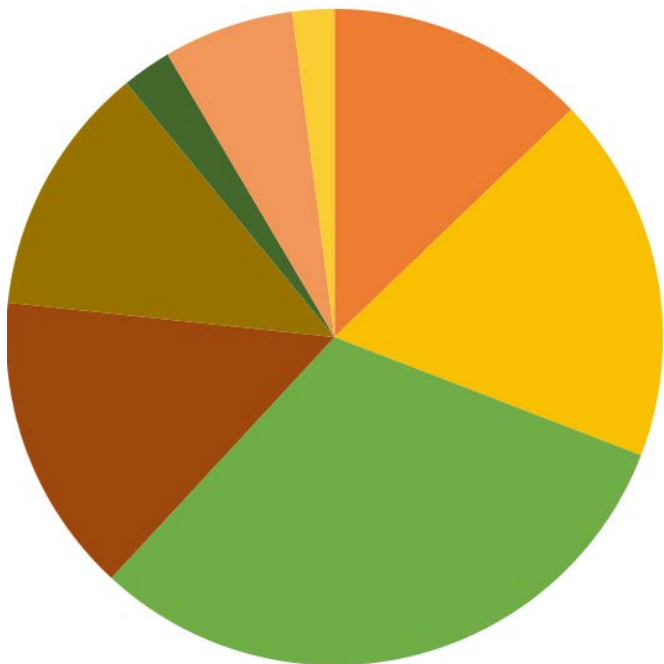


# INCOME AND EXPENSES

## 2021 Revenue



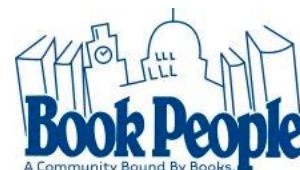
## 2021 Expenses



## PRESENTING SPONSORS



## MAJOR SPONSORS



## SUPPORTING SPONSORS





## TEXAS BOOK FESTIVAL 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

### CURRENT STAFF

Lois Kim, *Executive Director*

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Ke'ara Hunt, *Communications and Marketing Coordinator*

Gavin Quinn, *Programs and Financial Coordinator*

Michelle Hernandez, *School and Community Programs Coordinator*

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Olamaie Fotjasek  
Regan Gammon  
Deborah Green  
Carrie Healy  
Mary Herman  
Minnie Hollyman  
Suzon Kemp  
Harris L. "Shrub" Kempner  
Phil Loewy  
Janie McGarr  
Heidi Marquez Smith  
Kurt May  
Jill Meyers  
Catherine Miller  
Regina Montoya  
Whitney Hyder More  
Wolfgang Niedert  
Teresa Oppedal  
Amy Paddock  
Janna Paulson  
Ana Ruelas  
Sarah Queen  
Terry Quinn  
DJ Stout  
James Taylor  
Chris Tomlinson  
Archana Vemulapalli  
Roosevelt Weeks  
Ron Weiss  
Marc Winkelman  
Mary Yancy

Lisa Lucero  
Lisa Miller  
Anna Near  
Amanda Oudt  
Gen Padalecki  
Veronique Padalecki  
Janna Paulson  
Mary Louise Phelps  
Lesley Pitts  
Sarah Queen  
Ali Reyna  
Ana Ruelas  
Amelie Sanders  
Laurel Simmons  
Emily Slingerland  
Leslie Smith  
Michelle Strauss  
Darryl Tocker  
Linda van Bavel  
Kate Waitzkin  
Chandler Ware  
Heather Wilhelm  
Sarah Wittenbraker  
Lisa Womack

Veronica Rushing & Allen Gilmer / Southwest Community Foundation  
Herbert Simon Family Foundation  
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Kathleen Loughlin

### GOLD LEAF SPONSORS

\$25,000+

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\$10,000+

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### SPECIAL THANKS

MFI Foundation  
Nora Roberts Foundation  
Philanthropitch  
Texas Commission on the Arts  
United Way for Greater Austin



# THANK YOU!

Because of your support, TBF is able to provide the annual Festival free of charge and offer high quality literary programming and books to communities across Texas. Thank you for sharing Texas Book Festival's vision to inspire all Texans to love reading.

## WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

### VOLUNTEER

Texas Book Festival relies on nearly 1,000 volunteers during the Festival Weekend! If you're interested in volunteering, please contact Nicole Wielga, Logistics and Volunteer Coordinator, for more information, [nicole@texasbookfestival.org](mailto:nicole@texasbookfestival.org)

### ATTEND THE GALA

The First Edition Literary Gala is our main fundraising event of the year! It will be held on November 4, 2022, and will include a silent auction and inspiring program featuring some of the year's best authors.

### DONATE AND BECOME A FESTIVAL FRIEND

Every donation we receive goes directly to ensuring that the Annual Festival remains free and open to the public, as well as supports our state-wide outreach programs. As a Thank You for any donation of \$100 or more, we will send you a Festival Friends Pass, which provides you special access to the Festival. To make your tax deductible donation today, visit [texasbookfestival.org/donate](https://texasbookfestival.org/donate).

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