



July 10, 2015

UNESCO Creative Cities Committee

Dear Creative Cities Committee:

It is my privilege to present Seattle as a candidate for the UNESCO Creative Cities Network in the Literature designation. In our application, you'll read about Seattle's history of storytelling, our record-setting love of libraries, our many bookstores, and our diverse writing and publishing economy. In those areas and more, Seattle is a thriving literary hub. But the area's affiliation with writing is more than just municipal, it's individual—for Seattleites like myself, literature is crucial to who we are and how we define ourselves within our communities.

I grew up in a working-class neighborhood of West Seattle and by third grade I had still not learned to read. My mother, with the help of a nun from my school, worked with me tirelessly—it was their reading aloud to me, from a wide variety of books, day after day, that got me on track. Stories were integral not only to my imagination and creativity, but to my understanding of the growing world around me and my ability to learn *how* to learn. I've seen my story replicated in the lives of many other children throughout my career, and I'm proud to serve as mayor to a city that prioritizes writing and literature as much as Seattle does.

We are a city of educated, engaged readers and writers. Since 2005, Seattle has consistently rated in the top three in Central Connecticut State University's list of most literate cities in the United States. Our writing programs, publishing houses, library system, and literary events are nationally renowned, and we have more bookstores per capita than any other US city.

We're home to one of the most diverse postal codes in the United States and hundreds of languages can be heard in the halls of our schools. Our position—as a port city on the Pacific Rim, within a state bordering Canada—predisposes us to value different perspectives and welcome diverse voices. A book published in any language in the world can find an audience in Seattle.

This bid for designation as a UNESCO City of Literature is not merely an attempt to seek recognition of our rich literary culture. Rather, our city sees this as an opportunity for creative partnerships with the other Cities of Literature, as well as members of the greater Creative Cities Network (several of whom, like Kobe and Galway, we have existing Sister City relationships with). We are eager to contribute to this worldwide community that recognizes the human value and economic potential of the creative spirit—we envision artistic exchanges, creating and

sharing available quantitative and qualitative tools and systems for measuring successes, and helping to further the UNESCO and CCN values of culture and sustainable development here at home.

In the documents that comprise this bid, you will hear about many of the people and institutions that make Seattle such a unique and wonderful place to read and write. Our application has broad and diverse municipal and individual support, locally and nationally, and reflects our local passion for literature and a nationally recognized commitment to the literary arts.

I appreciate your consideration, and look forward to collaborating with the international network of designated Cities of Literature in order to strengthen and share our collective resources.

Sincerely,



Mayor Edward B. Murray
City of Seattle