THE Authors Guild

Annual Report

2025

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Dear Members,

I'm thrilled to share our 2025 annual report, which details our work on behalf of authors throughout the year.

Our motto this year is "Stronger together." We face unprecedented challenges today and tackling them requires all of us to work together in community with other creators and the rest of the publishing industry. We formed and joined many coalitions in the past year, and, with 17,500 members, we are stronger than ever! We set records for new members in one year (3,500) as well as in a single month (756 in September).

AI advocacy continued to dominate our efforts in 2025. Our legal staff played an instrumental role in the $1.5 billion Anthropic settlement—the largest copyright settlement in history—guiding class counsel and mobilizing all our resources to help authors know their rights and file claims before the upcoming March 30 deadline. We completed an intensive discovery process and built our arguments in our class action lawsuit against OpenAI and Microsoft. We lobbied for legislation that would (i) require AI companies to disclose their training data, (ii) enable creators to form collective licensing solutions, (iii) block foreign pirate sites where AI companies source ebooks, and (iv) require labeling of AI-generated content. Absent current AI labeling requirements, we launched our Human Authored certification mark, first for members then for all authors of books published in the U.S. and, through our sister organization, the Society of Authors, in the U.K.

We won a major First Amendment victory in our class action lawsuit against DOGE and the NEH over the illegal termination of more than 1,400 grants; the court issued a preliminary injunction in July, and we have requested summary judgment and a permanent injunction requiring the grants to be reinstated. We achieved victories against book banning laws in Florida, Arkansas, Texas, Iowa, and Colorado, with court after court agreeing with us and making it clear that restricting access to books based on personal or political views and without due process is unconstitutional. With member support, we also worked to help pass a Right to Read bill in Rhode Island and lobbied for similar legislation in Massachusetts and New York State.

Our media presence continued to grow and reflect our increasing influence on key advocacy issues, as reporters sought out our opinions on issues relating to AI, the Anthropic settlement, efforts to fight book banning, and our NEH lawsuit.

Our legal team handled a record 1,884 requests for members. We answered hundreds of inquiries from members about the Anthropic settlement, represented dozens of Albert Whitman & Company authors in bankruptcy proceedings, and sued TouchPoint Press on behalf of members for failing to pay authors what they are owed. We also transitioned to a new cloud-based member database that has improved our efficiency and freed up staff time to better serve members.

The Authors Guild Foundation raised more than $3 million, including more than $660,000 through our annual gala. The Foundation also received a grant from the Leon Levy Foundation to launch the Authors Guild Archive Project to preserve the historical records of our 114-year-old organization.

The following pages recount these efforts and more. Thank you for your membership and your support of authors' rights and a flourishing writing profession.

As always, please feel free to reach out to me at mary@authorsguild.org.

Onwards...

Mary Rasenberger
CEO

Advocacy

Artificial Intelligence

Generative AI continued to be the leading issue in the Guild's advocacy in 2025. Text-generating AI models (i.e., large language models, or LLMs) continued to improve, the number of AI-generated books on Kindle and other online stores skyrocketed, and the predicted risks to the writing profession started to materialize.

Using mere common sense and experience, we always knew that book marketplaces would become flooded with AI-generated texts. While this began in 2023 and 2024, the books that we saw on Amazon and elsewhere then were low quality and clearly generated with AI. For the most part, they were readily identifiable scams and knockoffs—books generated from the work of a single author, books with the same titles as new releases or that used real authors' names and biographies and discussed their subjects like Wikipedia pages—posted to steal a few sales from similar human-authored books by confusing consumers before Amazon found out and took them down. These books often infringe the copyright of the original author's books or are actionable unfair competition under trademark law; when we notified Amazon of such books they took down those that failed to meet its quality standards or were infringing (and continue to do so), but not before the scammers made a few sales.

Then, in 2025, we started to see an explosion of higher-quality AI books that meet Amazon's minimum standards. These days, you have to be very careful when buying any how-to, self-help, or genre fiction book because so many are generated with AI. Often, a reader does not realize a book is AI-generated until they are well into it—because it is voiceless and flat and offers nothing original or that they could not already find on the internet—and even then, some readers might just think it was not very good. It makes all of us wary of buying books that have not been personally recommended.

To protect consumers from unwittingly buying AI-generated books and other content, the Authors Guild continued to advocate for AI-generated content to be labeled, and we issued our Human Authored certification so that authors who write their own books can emphasize this for readers.

To be clear, the Guild does not oppose the use of AI per se, or writers' use of AI as a tool—though we strongly encourage writers to write the words themselves and, if they use AI to generate text, to rewrite it and put it in their voice. (If all someone is doing is sequential prompting, that, of course, is not writing, and the prompter should not present themselves as a writer.) But most importantly, what the Guild objects to—along with more than 96 percent of authors, according to our own and other surveys—is the illegal unauthorized use of our books to build their AI. AI companies think they deserve a pass because what they are building is so important. But builders of important technological developments still need to abide by the law and respect intellectual property as they do other property rights. They don't get to steal the supplies for their products because they think they are more important than those they are stealing from. Those are policy decisions to be made by governments—hopefully democratic, informed, and fair-minded ones.

The following is a summary of the Guild's activities in 2025 to ensure the survival of a robust and diverse writing profession.

Anthropic Settlement

Although we had no role in bringing the case, our advocacy team worked hard this year on the $1.5 billion *Bartz v. Anthropic* settlement—the largest copyright settlement amount in history. The case was brought by authors Charles Graeber, Kirk Wallace Johnson, and Andrea Bartz as a copyright infringement class action against Anthropic for training its LLMs on their books without permission. The court found that Anthropic had downloaded pirated copies of approximately 7.5 million books from notorious pirate sites LibGen and PiLiMi to train its Claude AI models and that it was liable for copyright infringement for the piracy. As part of the settlement, Anthropic agreed to pay roughly $3,000 per book in a court-determined class of approximately 500,000 books, with the award to be split between authors, publishers (if any), and any other legal or beneficial copyright owners in the work.

The Guild played an instrumental role in guiding class counsel to ensure their understanding of book publishing contracts, rights reversions, and potential splits between authors and their publishers under the various standard contracts, as well as other aspects of the publishing industry. Just as importantly, as soon as the court order authorizing the class and directing the claims process was announced, we mobilized to ensure authors knew about the settlement and understood their rights and potential benefits. We published a comprehensive FAQ on our website addressing eligibility requirements, payment allocation, default splits for trade and university press titles, and the dispute resolution process available when authors and publishers disagree on percentages. We also created a step-by-step claims guide walking authors through the process of searching the Works List and completing the online Claim Form. We hosted webinars for authors with co-lead counsel Rachel Geman of Lieff Cabraser Heimann & Bernstein and Rohit Nath and Michael Adamson of Susman Godfrey, who explained the settlement terms and fielded questions alongside Guild CEO Mary Rasenberger. These sessions drew strong attendance and are among our most-viewed member resources. We also guided peer author organizations in navigating the complexities of the settlement project.

Since the launch of the claims process, our legal staff has handled hundreds of individual inquiries from members navigating specific circumstances of the settlement, including authors with reverted rights, those uncertain about their registration status, and writers with questions about allocation splits.

The claims deadline is March 30, 2026, and we continue to encourage every eligible author to file. We continually update the resources on our website, and our staff stands ready to assist Authors Guild members file their claims. A final approval hearing is set for April 2026, and if the settlement is approved, payments are expected to start to go out late this summer.

Find all our information on the Anthropic settlement at authorsguild.org/anthropic.

OpenAI Suit

We continued to work on our class action copyright lawsuit against OpenAI and Microsoft, which has been consolidated for pretrial purposes with several other copyright suits against OpenAI before a single judge in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York.

The case is currently in the discovery process, with lengthy depositions of the named plaintiffs and Authors Guild legal staff taking place over the past several months. We would like to give all of the plaintiffs—David Baldacci, Taylor Branch, Michael Connelly, Sylvia Day, Jonathan Franzen, Christopher Golden, Andrew Sean Greer, John Grisham, David Henry Hwang, Matthew Klam, George R.R. Martin, Jodi Picoult, Stacy Schiff, and James Shapiro—who had to suffer through discovery and depositions a huge shoutout for standing up on behalf of the author community. At the same time, we have been working closely with the class action attorneys in support of our legal position in the case: that the mass copying of copyrighted books without permission for AI "training" purposes does not qualify as fair use.

Under the court's current scheduling order, expert witness discovery will run through the summer, and summary judgment briefing on the fair use issues will take place in the fall. This means that a ruling by the court on those issues is not expected until at least late 2026 or early 2027.

Federal Lobbying

On July 16, 2025, bestselling author and Guild member David Baldacci testified before the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime and Counterterrorism in a hearing titled "Too Big to Prosecute? Examining the AI Industry's Mass Ingestion of Copyrighted Works for AI Training." The hearing aimed to shine a spotlight on tech companies' practice of copying millions of books from notorious pirate websites. Our lawyers worked with Baldacci to prepare his testimony and his response to written questions for the record. Guild CEO Mary Rasenberger and Guild President W. Ralph Eubanks attended the hearing and spoke with senators afterwards about the impact of unregulated use of AI on the future of the writing profession.

Earlier in 2025, we organized a petition to Congress expressing deep dismay over the White House's unlawful firing of Register of Copyrights Shira Perlmutter the day after she issued a fair and balanced preliminary draft of the Copyright Office's long-awaited report on AI Training and Fair Use. The petition, which called for her immediate reinstatement, ultimately gathered more than 6,500 signatures from individuals across a broad spectrum of creative professions.

State Lobbying

In addition to lobbying for stronger AI regulations at the federal level, we worked with coalitions that included SAG-AFTRA, the National Association of Voice Actors, the Concept Art Association, and other prominent creator groups to lobby state governments to enact best practices for AI training and transparency.

In California, we sponsored AB 412, the AI Copyright Transparency Act, and AB 2013, the Artificial Intelligence Training Data Transparency Act. AB 412 would require generative AI developers to document and disclose copyrighted materials used for training models. It would also mandate a mechanism for rights holders to request information about their works to increase transparency. AB 2013 was signed into law in September 2024 and went into effect on January 1, 2026, requiring generative AI developers to disclose information about training datasets, including whether they contained copyrighted works. We are supporting similar bills in other states including Washington and New York.

Government Comments

The Guild submitted written comments to both U.S. and foreign government agencies as part of official inquiries into copyright and AI. We advocated for strong legal protections for authors in this area and explained how AI companies' theft of authors' works threatens the future of the writing profession.

White House AI Action Plan

The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) and the Networking and Information Technology Research and Development (NITRD) National Coordination Office (NCO) of the National Science Foundation requested comments on a broad range of issues related to AI to develop a national AI Action Plan—a comprehensive strategy to guide AI innovation and regulation in the United States.

We submitted formal comments on issues affecting authors on March 14, 2025.

Our comments focused on three main concerns. First, we emphasized that while AI offers valuable benefits and can serve as a tool for creators, the current AI development models pose significant threats to authors and the creative economy unless guardrails are enforced. This is because the major AI companies have built their large language models (LLMs) by scraping and ingesting vast quantities of copyrighted works—often from pirate websites—without authorization or compensation. Second, we explained that voluntary licensing is the likely path forward, not the adoption of new copyright exceptions. We urged the administration to support voluntary, freely negotiated licensing arrangements between copyright owners and AI companies—a market that already exists and is growing rapidly. Third, we argued that copyright or similar intellectual protection should not be extended to AI-generated works. Such protection would undermine the market for human-created works without providing any benefit to society.

White House Inquiry on AI Development

In September 2025, the OSTP issued an additional request for public input on AI policy. This request asked for comments on federal laws, regulations, and processes that may unnecessarily hinder the development and deployment of AI technologies in the United States. On October 27, we submitted comments aimed at refuting anticipated comments from tech companies and anti-copyright interest groups arguing that applying copyright law to AI training is a hindrance to AI development. We explained how that assertion is simply wrong: Copyright is not a barrier any more than the need to pay for other essential supplies such as data farms and energy.

We also emphasized that, contrary to AI companies' claims, it is eminently feasible and cost-effective for these companies to license books to train their language models. For books and other professionally authored works, licenses for training are readily available. Dozens of AI licensing deals have already been reached, and new licensing platforms are constantly emerging.

Finally, we stressed that licensing is crucial to the viability of the creative professions. A single book typically takes many years to research, write, and edit, and the author, publisher, and others in the value chain need to be paid to make that investment worthwhile. Without licensing, authors have no control over how AI companies use their works or how those works appear in AI outputs. AI-generated books are already flooding platforms like Amazon, with knockoffs and summaries diluting markets and diverting sales from human authors. If allowed to continue, these practices will undermine public benefits that our copyright system has protected since the framing of the Constitution.

U.K. Consultation

In 2024, the British government proposed a troubling "data mining" exception to U.K. copyright law that would expressly permit AI companies to use any copyrighted work to train their AI models for free and without permission. The only right that authors and other copyright owners would retain would be to opt out of training by some affirmative action (and it was not clear how that could even be achieved).

The government simultaneously conducted a consultation process in which members of the public could submit comments on its proposal. We submitted comments on February 25, 2025, expressing our full agreement with comments filed by the Society of Authors, our counterpart organization in the U.K., arguing that the government's proposal to require creators to affirmatively opt out of having their works used for AI training would constitute a massive, unjustifiable transfer of wealth to the tech sector at the expense of the creative professions, both in the U.K. and around the world.

Human Authored

As AI-generated content floods the market, we are ratcheting up our efforts to make sure that human-authored works stand out and are not devalued. In January 2025, we launched our Human Authored certification program, exclusively for members to start, allowing authors to formally attest and indicate that their work was created by a person, not a machine.

Human Authored provides authors with a distinctive certification mark connected to a unique registration number, which can be verified in our public database. The mark can be placed on covers, copyright pages, and marketing materials. Guild members can certify their works at no cost. Since its launch, the Human Authored mark has met with highly positive reception, with more than 1,250 authors registering nearly 4,000 titles in the first year. The certification requires that all but a de minimis portion of the text was written by a human. Standard AI-assisted tools like grammar checkers and editing software do not disqualify a work, nor does using AI to create indexes or tables of contents or for brainstorming or research—provided the actual prose is human authored.

In March 2026, we relaunched the mark with a new logo developed in partnership with our U.K. sister organization, the Society of Authors, marking a first-of-its-kind worldwide effort to recognize and distinguish human authorship from AI mimicry, and expanded the program to all authors and publishers of books published in the U.S. Learn more about registering a work as Human Authored at authorsguild.org/human.

The new Human Authored certification mark

Licensing

The Authors Guild believes that licensing is the path forward for ensuring authors are compensated when their works are used to train AI. We continued to work with Created by Humans, an AI rights licensing platform founded with the support of bestselling authors including Walter Isaacson, Douglas Preston, Sylvia Day, and Michael Chabon. Created by Humans allows authors to take control of how their published works are used by AI companies. Through the platform, authors can opt in (or out) of licensing arrangements, negotiate terms, and receive compensation. We are also supporting other efforts in the industry to foster licensing and bring an end to illegal unlicensed uses of authors' works in AI training and outputs.

Piracy

Block BEARD Act

The Authors Guild has long fought foreign pirate sites that operate with impunity, stealing and distributing books while remaining beyond the reach of U.S. law. These same sites have become the primary sources AI companies use to acquire training data—compounding the harm to authors. In August 2025, we welcomed the introduction of the Block Bad Electronic Art and Recording Distributors (Block BEARD) Act, a bipartisan effort to finally give authors meaningful tools against offshore piracy.

The bill, introduced by Senators Thom Tillis (R-NC), Chris Coons (D-DE), Marsha Blackburn (R-TN), and Adam Schiff (D-CA), would create a judicial process to designate foreign websites as "piracy sites" and authorize courts to order internet service providers and domain registrars to block U.S. access to them. The proposal is similar to another bill we supported earlier in 2025, introduced by Rep. Zoe Lofgren (D-CA).

We actively lobbied for both bills' introduction and continue to advocate for their passage. We believe they represent a crucial step toward cutting off the pipeline of stolen works that fuels both piracy and unlicensed AI training.

Scams

There has been an unfortunate, extreme uptick in scams aimed at authors. These scams may promise publication with large advances, motion picture deals, or even appearances at book clubs or other speaking engagements. Almost all of them originate overseas in countries where enforcement of U.S. judgments is difficult to impossible, meaning that normal legal measures cannot prevent them or obtain restitution. As such, our primary goal has been to make sure as many authors as possible are aware of these scams and do not fall prey to them.

To keep authors informed, we include regular scam alerts in our newsletter and on social media. We also produced two webinars on scams in 2025: Investigative journalist Brent Crane joined us to discuss his *Bloomberg* feature on PageTurner Press in August, and cybercriminologist Chris Kayser explained the social engineering exploited by scammers and how to identify scams in October. Both sessions are available in our resource library.

We also assist to the best of our ability when members and nonmembers alike reach out to us about various scams: providing information on how they can protect themselves and their clients, drafting cease and desist letters where appropriate, and contacting law enforcement. When scams fraudulently misuse the names of agents and agencies, film directors or producers, or other prominent people and companies, we also notify them so they can take their own action against the scammers.

Banned Books and Censorship

The Guild continued to fight attempts to ban books or prohibit the teaching of certain ideas related to race, racism, antisemitism, gender orientation, sexual identity, and reproductive rights and to challenge unconstitutional laws that violate the First Amendment rights of authors.

Lawsuits

We are a plaintiff in several lawsuits across the country. The following is an update on how various cases progressed in 2025.

Florida

The court granted our motion for summary judgment in *Penguin Random House v. Gibson*, finding the law's prohibition on books that "describe sexual conduct" facially overbroad and a violation of the First Amendment. (The state has appealed this decision to the Eleventh Circuit.) This case challenged the book removal provisions contained in Florida's HB 1069, which allow for the indiscriminate removal of books based on vague and overbroad criteria and pose a grave threat to intellectual freedom and the right to read.

Arkansas

The Authors Guild and other plaintiffs were awarded attorneys' fees in *Fayetteville Public Library v. Crawford County*. (Enforcement of this award is delayed until the Eighth Circuit decides the appeal.) In its summary judgment ruling, the court emphasized the law's fundamental constitutional flaws: "If the General Assembly's purpose in passing Section 1 was to protect younger minors from accessing inappropriate sexual content in libraries and bookstores, the law will only achieve that end at the expense of everyone else's First Amendment rights. The law deputizes librarians and booksellers as the agents of censorship; when motivated by the fear of jail time, it is likely they will shelve only books fit for young children and segregate or discard the rest." Briefing on the appeal has been completed, and the parties are currently awaiting a date for oral arguments.

Texas

The Western District of Texas granted the motion for summary judgment made by the Authors Guild and other plaintiffs and issued a permanent injunction in *Book People v. Wong*. (This decision has been appealed to the Fifth Circuit.) In that case, we worked with a coalition of Texas bookstores, national booksellers, and publishers to defend the right to free expression and protect the long-established rights of local communities to set and implement standards for school materials.

Iowa

The Southern District of Iowa granted the motion for preliminary injunction made by the Authors Guild and other plaintiffs in *Penguin Random House v. Robbins et al.*, condemning the law for creating a "puritanical pall of orthodoxy" over school libraries. We await the result of the state's appeal to the Eighth Circuit, which has already been briefed and argued.

Colorado

Discovery is ongoing in *Crookshanks et al. v. the Elizabeth School District*, in which the Authors Guild and other plaintiffs challenge the school board's decision to permanently ban 19 books, many of which are highly acclaimed and widely taught across the country. After the school district appealed the preliminary injunction ordering them to restore the books to the shelves pending the completion of the litigation, it decided to drop this appeal days before oral argument, to the court's annoyance. The plaintiffs are exploring whether they can demand attorneys' fees for their work on an unnecessary appeal.

Amicus Briefs

We filed *amicus curiae* (or "friend of the court") briefs before the U.S. Supreme Court in two other cases opposing book banning laws.

Mahmoud v. Taylor

Together with the Educational Book & Media Association and Penguin Random House, we asked the Supreme Court to uphold the lower court's decision in *Mahmoud v. Taylor*. The lower court had denied the plaintiffs' request for a preliminary injunction allowing them to opt out of having their children read certain books containing LGBTQIA+ content for statedly religious reasons.

Our brief argued that this was de facto censorship and that mere exposure to certain books and ideas does not constitute a burden on the plaintiffs' freedom of religion. Unfortunately, the Supreme Court disagreed, holding that the parents were entitled to a preliminary injunction while the case is being litigated and ordering the school board to notify the parents in advance when these books are used and excuse their children from instruction at that time.

We are concerned about the long-term implications of this ruling, which represents a dangerous departure from established precedent and undermines the foundational principles of public education in America.

Little v. Llano County

We joined with the Association of American Publishers, several prominent publishers, and authors Stephen King and James Patterson to file an amicus brief asking the Supreme Court to hear an appeal in the case of *Little v. Llano County*, where library users sued over the removal of certain books from a Texas public library. The district court issued a preliminary injunction ordering the books to be restored to the shelves, which was initially upheld by a panel of the Fifth Circuit.

Unfortunately, the defendants requested a rehearing by the Fifth Circuit's entire panel of judges, which reversed the preliminary injunction and dismissed the plaintiffs' free speech claims, stating: "Plaintiffs cannot invoke a right to receive information to challenge a library's removal of books." The Supreme Court then refused to hear the appeal, thus ending the case.

Right to Read Laws

Along with Unite Against Book Bans, the Right to Read Working Group, and other coalitions, we submitted testimony in favor of "right to read" bills with strengthened author protections in Rhode Island and Massachusetts that led to the passage of these laws in both states. We also lobbied for a similar bill in New York State.

Letters

We signed on to 12 letters from the National Coalition Against Censorship (NCAC) to school boards around the country after they removed books from library shelves without due process. For example, a school district in Hillsborough County, Florida, removed more than 600 titles in violation of its own policy, while another district in Knox County, Tennessee, removed more than 100 books. Some of these are the result of school districts attempting to comply with broader efforts to limit students' access to certain books in their states, but others are not pursuant to any law or policy requiring them.

The NCAC's letters aim to get the school districts in question to reconsider their decisions without the need for litigation or other actions. In cases where districts do not have proper policies concerning the removal of books, the NCAC provides sample materials and policy guidelines for them to follow.

Other Amicus Briefs

In addition to our amicus briefs in *Mahmoud v. Taylor* and *Little v. Llano County*, we filed briefs in three other cases in 2025:

Vetter v. Resnik

We organized an amicus brief with the Dramatists Legal Defense Fund, Novelists, Inc., the Romance Writers of America, the Society of Composers & Lyricists, and the Songwriters Guild of America in a highly significant case involving termination of copyright transfers. Under the Copyright Act, authors or their heirs have the right to terminate any license or assignment of copyrights, notwithstanding the contract terms, several decades (generally 35–40 years) after the grant or publication date. The issue in this case was whether that right is limited to U.S. transfers or includes any foreign rights that the author may have transferred to a publisher.

In our brief, we explained that Congress adopted the termination provisions to ensure that authors and other creators are not perpetually locked into one-sided contracts that they signed early in their careers when they had little bargaining power. We advised the court that limiting termination to U.S. law would undermine that intent by giving publishers free rein to continue exploiting authors' works abroad after the grant is terminated, significantly weakening the value of the recaptured rights.

In January 2026, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit issued a decision agreeing with our position. This is a significant development for authors whose publishing contracts granted foreign rights to the publisher. We are pleased that the court recognized Congress's intent to ensure that authors have meaningful ability to recapture their copyrights where their work proves more successful than originally anticipated.

Read more about this case at authorsguild.org/vetter.

McCaleb v. Long

In *McCaleb v. Long*, we filed a brief with the ACLU of Tennessee, the Electronic Frontier Foundation, the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression, the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, and the Tennessee Coalition for Open Government asking the Sixth Circuit to find that the First Amendment public right of access applied to the meetings of a Tennessee Advisory Commission.

In that case, the executive editor of an online news organization focusing on local government news alleged that his exclusion from the commission's meetings violated the First Amendment. We signed on to this brief because the ability of the public (both as individuals and through journalists acting as their surrogates) to access and observe the workings of government is a key element of the First Amendment and our nation's democratic freedoms. The District Court for the Middle District of Tennessee initially granted the plaintiff a preliminary injunction before ultimately finding in the defendant's favor.

Our brief recognized that there are limitations on the public's right to access certain governmental operations but argued that the plaintiff should be granted access in this case under the "logic and experience test," which requires the court to consider "whether the place and process have historically been open to the press and general public" and "whether public access plays a significant positive role in the functioning of the particular process in question." The Sixth Circuit disagreed, holding that the test had only been applied within the context of adjudicatory proceedings, which was not the case here.

Cox Communications v. Sony

In October 2025, we joined Sisters in Crime, the Romance Writers of America, the Songwriters Guild of America, Novelists Inc., the Dramatists Guild of America, and the Society of Composers and Lyricists to file an amicus brief with the Supreme Court in *Cox Communications v. Sony*, a case with important implications for authors' ability to protect their work against online piracy.

Cox Communications, a major internet service provider (ISP), was found liable for "contributory infringement" after it continued providing service to subscribers it knew were repeat copyright infringers. The company received thousands of notices identifying specific accounts engaged in piracy, but Cox chose not to terminate those accounts because the subscription revenue was too valuable to lose.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit upheld a jury's finding that Cox "materially contributed" to the infringement by maintaining these subscribers' internet access despite knowing they were "substantially certain" to continue stealing copyrighted works. Cox has asked the Supreme Court to reverse that decision, arguing that as long as its internet service *can* be used legally, it shouldn't be held responsible for how customers actually use it—even when the company has specific knowledge of ongoing theft.

Our brief urges the Supreme Court to uphold the finding of Cox's liability. We explain that the ability to hold ISPs liable in circumstances like these is critical to copyright enforcement online. When millions of people can copy and share creative works quickly, anonymously, and across borders, going after individual infringers one by one is nearly impossible. It is critical that internet companies be held accountable for the piracy they facilitate, especially when they know exactly what's happening and choose to profit from it anyway.

Read more about this case at authorsguild.org/cox.

Ebook Licensing Bills

The Guild continued its defense of authors against state-level ebook licensing mandates that threaten to harm author incomes by forcing licensing terms on publishers and independently published authors. In 2025, we lobbied against these bills in Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Washington, D.C.

Proponents of these bills have shifted strategy: Instead of requiring publishers to license books on certain terms such as loan limits and period restrictions, a form of compulsory licensing that federal courts have found to be unconstitutional, they are trying to prohibit libraries from entering into contracts with common licensing terms the proponents say are unfair. In Connecticut, where SB 1234 passed the state house, we submitted testimony warning that this would likely result in publishers refusing to change their business models, leaving state libraries unable to license many new books or renew existing licenses for a substantial portion of their catalogs. We also met with members of the Washington, D.C., city council to warn them about the deleterious consequences of state regulation of ebook licensing on authors.

The Guild has long supported public libraries and advocated for them on issues of funding and book bans, and we are aligned with libraries' mission of getting as many books as possible in all formats. But mandatory licensing laws are not the answer. They expose indie authors and small presses to compliance burdens they cannot meet, invite a patchwork of conflicting state rules that would destabilize the publishing industry, and ultimately reduce—not expand—the availability of books to library patrons.

Non-Paying Publishers

Adelaide Books

We have received complaints concerning Adelaide Books and its owner and editor, Stevan Nikolic, for several years. Complaints include numerous failures to adhere to its contractual obligations concerning advertising and promotion of its authors' works, failure to provide contractually mandated royalty statements and payments, and failure to provide prepaid copies of books that authors were obligated to purchase before signing a contract.

Despite numerous attempts to resolve these issues on behalf of our affected members, Adelaide has failed to adhere to deadlines, revert rights, send files, or address outstanding royalty payments, royalty statements, and unfulfilled pre-purchase book reimbursement payments for many of our members

We are continuing to monitor the situation and work towards a resolution. Unfortunately, Mr. Nikolic has become largely unresponsive; we believe he is currently in Portugal, which has complicated the possibility of bringing litigation against Adelaide.

TouchPoint Press

We started receiving a large number of complaints about TouchPoint Press in early 2023. All of the complaints detailed similar issues: missing royalty payments, lack of communication from owner Sheri Williams, failure to publish in a timely fashion, and failure to respond to termination requests. Ms. Williams finally responded to us after multiple attempts to contact her, but she disappeared again as we tried to resolve the numerous outstanding claims against TouchPoint Press.

In 2025, we and 18 of our members filed suit against TouchPoint and its owner in Arkansas. We anticipate a default judgment will be entered against Ms. Williams but are currently waiting for the judge to rule in the case.

DX Varos

Complaints about DX Varos began after its owner passed away in July 2023. Issues include non-payment of royalties, failure to provide tax documents, limited communications, and the refusal to acknowledge or fix mistakes.

We have advised our members that their contracts allow them to terminate their agreements if DX Varos and its new owner, Karen Morrisey, have defaulted upon the delivery of quarterly royalty payments or statements. An affected author may cancel the contract by sending a 30-day cure notice, which, if not resolved, results in automatic contract termination. We continue to reach out to DX Varos to resolve issues with tax documents and unpaid royalties.

Rare Bird Books

We have received complaints spanning multiple years regarding Rare Bird Books' failure to pay advances and royalties. Despite our multiple efforts to secure payment, Rare Bird Books continues to default on its payment obligations while signing new authors and releasing new works, with no payments made to authors. We are continuing to monitor the situation and will determine if further actions need to be taken.

Blushing Books

We recently received numerous new complaints about Blushing Books, which we tried to work with a couple of years ago. Complaints largely concern non-payment of royalties and other contractual breaches. We are gathering more information and working on next steps.

Mango Publishing

We have received a number of complaints regarding Mango Publishing and its failure to pay authors. After reaching out to Mango's owner, Christopher McKenney, we were informed that Mango was shutting down due to the company's inability to pay its outstanding debts.

Mr. McKenney informed us that all Mango titles were either sold to another publisher or reverted to the authors. We were also informed that Mango is closing its doors completely and cannot pay any of the outstanding royalty payments owed. At this time, we are helping members get their rights back and remove their works from Amazon and other retail channels.

Albert Whitman Bankruptcy

In April 2025, century-old children's book publisher Albert Whitman & Company filed for Chapter 11, Subchapter V bankruptcy. For years prior to the bankruptcy filing, we had worked directly with Albert Whitman leadership to address chronic delays in royalty payments and rights reversions affecting our members.

Upon learning of the filing, we responded swiftly by retaining bankruptcy attorneys from Royer Cooper Cohen Braunfeld LLC to guide the Authors Guild and its members in navigating the proceedings. We published detailed guidance explaining the Chapter 11 process, authors' rights as creditors, and the critical importance of filing proof-of-claim forms by the court deadline. We also hosted a webinar to walk members through the bankruptcy process and what to expect in the months ahead.

On May 28, 2025, we attended a 341 hearing—the required meeting of creditors where the debtor answers questions under oath—and encouraged authors to join as well to make a strong showing. At the hearing, Albert Whitman's president testified that the company had been profitable for 16 of the last 17 years, but a failed $2.2 million investment in a digital venture, Albert Whitman Multimedia, combined with an employment lawsuit pushed the company into bankruptcy. When pressed about the publisher's chronic delays in royalty payments, company leadership denied any delinquency—a claim that authors, agents, and Guild staff contradicted with examples.

We discovered that many authors had not received notice of the hearing at all. It was only through Guild outreach that they learned of this critical moment in the case. We subsequently reviewed the court-filed Schedule of Creditors and found that some authors who were owed money were not listed. We published the schedule (with addresses redacted) and urged affected authors to contact us so we could help them preserve their claims.

Throughout this process, our legal team fielded inquiries from members navigating contract rejections, frozen rights, and uncertain royalty payments. We will continue to monitor the docket and provide updates as the case moves forward.

Membership & Outreach

2025 was a record-setting year for membership. After crossing the 15,000-member mark in September 2024, we reached another milestone barely a year later when we surpassed 17,000 total members on October 16, 2025. In the 2025 calendar year, we welcomed more than 3,500 new members, eclipsing our previous high of 2,900 new members in 2023.

In March alone, we received an astonishing 756 applications, predominantly from authors joining due to our advocacy work. This shattered our previous high of 423 applications in September 2023.

As of March 5, 2026, we had a total of 17,472 members, 1,493 more than at the same time last year, with 14,623 members signed up for auto renewal. Auto renewal continues to keep our retention rate high and makes payment processing more efficient for our staff.

Member Services

Marketing and Publicity Support

As authors adjust to the expectation that they do much of their own book promotion, we have built out our Launchpad resource hub with articles, checklists, and webinar recordings on every aspect of marketing and publicity.

This past year, we worked with two professional publicists to offer low-cost, small-group meetings to address select topics for authors. With the addition of these, we now have recordings of 20 webinars on a variety of marketing and publicity topics available along with written materials.

Launchpad materials are available exclusively for Guild members in our resource library at authorsguild.org/launchpad.

Legal Services

The legal department handled a record number of member requests in FY 2024–25, addressing 1,884 matters compared to 1,750 the previous year—a 9-percent increase. We expect to exceed this workload in FY 2025–26.

FY 2024–25 Scorecard
(October 1, 2024–September 30, 2025)

- 394 book contract reviews
- 124 agency contract reviews
- 46 reversion of rights inquiries
- 115 inquiries on copyright law, including infringement, registration, duration, and fair use
- 32 inquiries regarding securing permissions and privacy releases
- 44 First Amendment queries

- 1,129 other inquiries, including electronic rights, literary estates, contract disputes, contract questions, translation contract reviews, translation contract queries, periodical and multimedia contracts, movie and television options, internet piracy, liability insurance, finding an agent, and attorney referrals

Web Services

The core of our web services offerings for members is Sitebuilder, our low-cost, easy-to-use platform that allows authors to create websites quickly and easily. Members can build their own websites using 77 different templates and color palettes, or they can opt for Site Express—where you simply fill out a form and the Guild's web services team builds a website for you to review and approve. We also offer domain name registration and custom email addresses.

We currently host or manage 2,022 websites, 2,934 domain names, and 1,068 email accounts. In 2025, we activated 142 new author websites and built 110 Site Express websites.

We are constantly working to improve Sitebuilder in response to member feedback and to ensure it remains competitive in the marketplace. Sitebuilder upgrades in 2025 included:

- Retiring an outdated email newsletter tool (and assisting affected members with the transition to another platform)
- Transitioning to a new email delivery solution to cut down on the amount of spam users receive through their Sitebuilder websites and their Authors Guild member profiles
- Improved tracking for individual blog posts
- Various bug fixes and maintenance updates, particularly with the way files and SSL are handled on the server

For any questions about these improvements, please email webservices@authorsguild.org.

Regional Chapters

New Chapter and New Ambassadors

In December, we launched a **new Denver chapter**, helmed by co-ambassadors Kirsten "Kiki" Ringer and Rob Samborn. We also welcomed new chapter ambassadors in three other regions:

- **Tampa/St. Petersburg:** Anthony Borruso and Jennyfer Gilgan
- **Bay Area:** Amy Z. Chan, Pia Hinckle, Duane Horton, and Nikoo Yahyazadeh
- **Washington, D.C.:** Liza Achilles, Jeffrey James Higgins, and Maria Levato

We are currently searching for new ambassadors in **Chicago** and **New York City**. If you'd like more information about getting involved in your local chapter, please email chapters@authorsguild.org.

Active Chapters

We currently have 16 active chapters in the following metro areas. You can sign up for updates from your local chapter at authorsguild.org/regional-chapters.

- Phoenix, Arizona
- Los Angeles, California
- San Diego, California
- San Francisco Bay Area, California
- Denver, Colorado
- Washington, D.C.
- St. Petersburg/Tampa, Florida
- Chicago, Illinois
- Boston, Massachusetts
- Detroit, Michigan
- Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina
- Las Vegas, Nevada
- New York, New York

- Portland, Oregon
- Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- Austin, Texas

Chapter Events

The chapters hosted 69 in-person and virtual events in 2025. We hope to see this hybrid approach continue as it gives members the most opportunities to get involved.

We have streamlined our process for announcing chapter events so that we can include them in our email newsletter and on our events calendar at authorsguild.org/events.

- January 8 — New Year's Resolution Session (Detroit)
- January 14 — Tampa Social (Tampa / St. Pete)
- January 27 — Agent Talk with Danielle Egan-Miller (Chicago)
- January 29 — Medford Pub Night ft. Poet Laureate Elect Max Heinegg (Boston)
- February 11 — Tampa Social (Tampa / St. Pete)
- February 11 — Book Reviews with Donna Seaman (Chicago)
- February 12 — Writing Ritual (Detroit)
- February 23 — Readings About Love (Los Angeles)
- February 25 — Dock Street Brewery Gathering (Philadelphia)
- March 1 — Spring Brunch (San Diego)
- March 11 — Tampa Social (Tampa / St. Pete)
- March 12 — Writing Ritual (Detroit)
- March 25 — Meet and Greet (Chicago)
- April 7 — Ghost Writing with Dan Gerstein (Boston)
- April 8 — Tampa Social (Tampa / St. Pete)
- April 9 — Writing Ritual (Detroit)
- April 10 — AG Members Reading (Las Vegas & Phoenix)
- April 27 — L.A. Times Festival of Books Gathering (Los Angeles)
- May 3 — Half-Day Writing Retreat: Reignite Your Writing Spirit (Detroit)
- May 8 — Conversation with Eric Smith @ Harriett's Bookshop (Philadelphia)
- May 13 — Tampa Social (Tampa / St. Pete)
- May 14 — Book Banning in Oregon and How to Respond to It (Portland)
- May 19 — New York Society Library Gathering (New York City)
- May 22 — Book Marketing with Jenn Hanson-dePaula (San Diego)
- May 29 — Meet and Greet (Chicago)
- June 10 — Tampa Social (Tampa / St. Pete)
- June 11 — Secrets of a Bestselling Author: Vanessa Miller (Raleigh-Durham)
- June 11 — Writing Ritual (Detroit)
- June 12 — Expanding Your Income Streams with Diana Holquist (Las Vegas & Phoenix)
- June 26 — ALA Conference Social Meetup (Philadelphia)
- June 27 — Elaine's Literary Salon Meet-and-Greet (Washington D.C.)
- July 8 — Tampa Social (Tampa / St. Pete)
- July 9 — Writing Ritual (Detroit)
- July 10 — Meetup at Mendocino Farms (San Diego)
- July 16 — Words of Resistance Teach-In (Boston)
- July 26 — Busboys and Poets Gathering (Washington D.C.)
- August 3 — Creative Partnerships (Raleigh-Durham)
- August 9 — Book-to-Film Seminar (Washington D.C.)

- August 12 — Trivia Night (Tampa / St. Pete)
- August 13 — Writing Ritual (Detroit)
- August 26 — Member Meet-Up (Chicago)
- September 4 — Networking at Shaw's Tavern (Washington D.C.)
- September 9 — Tampa Social (Tampa / St. Pete)
- September 10 — Writing Ritual ft. Stanley Williams (Detroit)
- September 18 — Marketing and Promotional Challenges (Chicago)
- September 21 — Get to Know Your Indie Booksellers (Raleigh-Durham)
- September 23 — Member Meetup and Elizabeth Gilbert Event (Tampa / St. Pete)
- September 28 — Festival of Readings (Los Angeles)
- October 6 — *Banned Together* Film Screening (Washington D.C.)
- October 8 — Writing Ritual (Detroit)
- October 14 — Tampa Social (Tampa / St. Pete)
- October 14 — *The Librarians* Film (Los Angeles)
- October 23 — Member Social (Las Vegas and Phoenix)
- October 30 — Easy Tiger Meet and Greet (Austin)
- November 7 — First Friday Writing Sprint (San Francisco Bay Area)
- November 7 — Griot and Grey Owl Conference Appearance (Raleigh-Durham)
- November 11 — Tampa Social (Tampa / St. Pete)
- November 12 — The Art of Storytelling with Gina Joseph (Detroit)
- November 13 — *Banned Together* Film Screening (San Diego)
- November 21 — How to Pitch Your Work with Ann Rose and Pitch Dis (Washington D.C.)
- November 21 — Banned and Challenged Picture Books (Raleigh-Durham)
- November 22 — Art and Conversation (Los Angeles)
- December 5 — First Friday Writing Sprint (San Francisco Bay Area)
- December 8 — Palo Alto Coffee Chat (San Francisco Bay Area)
- December 9 — Tampa Social (Tampa / St. Pete)
- December 10 — Writing Ritual (Detroit)
- December 10 — Holiday Party at Elaine's Literary Salon (Washington D.C.)
- December 10 — Bookstore and Beer (San Francisco Bay Area)
- December 19 — Holiday Party at Harriett's Bookshop (Philadelphia)

Member Technology Updates

Member Database

In September, we completed the transition from 4D, the member database we had used for over 30 years, to a new member data platform, Wicket. The new platform has a number of advantages:

- **Better service for members:** The new database has improved our application workflow and streamlined or automated other processes, freeing up staff time so they can better serve members.
- **Secure cloud access:** Unlike 4D, which ran on a physical server in our office, Wicket is based in the cloud, allowing our hybrid staff secure access from anywhere.
- **Integrations:** Wicket natively integrates with other platforms we use, including Mailchimp for member email communications and Higher Logic for our member community forum, passing data back and forth and connecting it to member records.
- **Member insights:** The data Wicket pulls in from other platforms allows us to see all member activity in a single place and create reports, giving us a more holistic view of overall engagement.
- **Simplified billing:** Wicket has enabled us to improve our billing system and allow automated posting of most member payments. This simplifies processing of dues payments and frees up staff time.

Human Authored Portal

Our development team built a custom portal for the Human Authored certification, which we launched for members in January 2025. (Read more about Human Authored in the Advocacy section.) Throughout 2025, we continued to improve and expand the portal:

- **Multi-author works:** We built a process for authors of multi-author works to co-register their books.
- **Non-members:** Opening certification up to all authors of books published in the U.S. required us to build in non-member accounts, fee payment, and identity verification. (These requirements are waived for members.)
- **Publishers:** Publishers can now request access to the portal and bulk-register their catalogs at a discount.
- **New logo:** We re-launched Human Authored with a new certification mark when the program expanded to non-members and publishers.

Coming Soon

Updated Welcome Kit

We are overhauling our welcome kit for new members. While we've updated the welcome kit's contents over the last few years, we are beginning the process of reimagining the look and overall message to better serve new members and help them understand all the benefits of Guild membership.

Member Involvement

Our entire staff recently met for two days to brainstorm ways to better engage members and offer more ways for them to get involved in our work and their communities through our regional chapters, local events, grassroots advocacy work, and more. Make sure you receive our member newsletter and stay tuned as we begin to roll out these new initiatives over the coming months.

Communications

Expanded Comms Team

In response to our growing communications needs, we expanded our team in 2025, hiring a new part-time social media contractor and a full-time digital content manager to help with the website and email communications. This brings our communications team from three to four people, better equipping us to meet the needs of the organization and authors in general.

Website

Resource Library

We continued to enhance our resource library, which has grown to include more than 275 articles and event recordings. Improvements included adding new content, expanding and refreshing existing content, and reorganizing how visitors find and navigate resources.

- **Legal content:** We published new articles on evergreen topics, such as copyright basics, fair use, copyright registration, libel and defamation, and literary estates. We also revised our author's guide to agency agreements.
- **Landing pages:** We created new landing pages about author contracts and literary agents. These pages bring together all our resources on these topics, making it easier for authors to find relevant information.
- **Navigation menu:** We updated the Resources submenu on our main website navigation, dividing resources into legal and business topics and linking directly to articles or landing pages for the most important topics.
- **Topic and audience tags:** We reorganized the resource library sidebar filters, simplifying the topic list, expanding the audience list, and updating the tags on every resource.
- **Featured resources:** We replaced individual resources featured at the top of the resource library with key landing pages, allowing us to showcase more of what we have available for authors.

New Pages

We published multiple new pages elsewhere on our website in 2025:

- **Anthropic copyright settlement:** The Guild has worked hard to keep authors informed about the $1.5 billion Anthropic settlement (described in detail in the Advocacy section of this report). In addition to the many news updates we posted throughout the settlement process, we built a central hub gathering everything authors need to know about the settlement in one place that has been widely cited as a resource. This page was the number one Google result for "Anthropic settlement" until the official settlement website went live and was by far the most viewed page on our website in 2025; all of our Anthropic pages combined were visited more than 270,000 times.
- **History of the Guild:** The Authors Guild's history goes back to 1912 and the founding of the Authors' League of America. For those interested in this history, we've reprinted a *Bulletin* article

from our 100th anniversary in 2012 describing the League's founding. Find it at authorsguild.org/about.

- **Press:** We created a new destination for journalists and media professionals, making it easy for them to find basic facts about the organization, press releases, and contact info. Find it at authorsguild.org/press.
- **Strategic plan:** We posted our three-year plan for 2025–28, developed with the Authors Guild Council and the Authors Guild Foundation board, outlining our priorities for advocacy, membership, member services, communications, and programming. Find it at authorsguild.org/three-year-plan.

Visual Refresh

We have been working to refresh some of the design elements on our website, including photos, page headers, and iconography, which had been largely unchanged since we relaunched the site in 2022. In 2025, we replaced photos on a number of pages and began rolling out different styles of header images in our news and resource sections. We also redesigned our Membership page (authorsguild.org/membership) with a more appealing format for the tables listing member levels and benefits.

We will be wrapping up this project in the near future, rolling out new photos and icons on our home page and throughout the site.

Newsletter

Our newsletter audience has grown significantly in recent years, thanks in large part to high-profile advocacy efforts and our increased media presence. In 2025, the audience grew by more than 2,000 members and 2,500 non-members. In total, the newsletter now reaches 32,000 authors, industry professionals, and supporters.

Media Coverage

Our advocacy work received significant coverage in national newspapers, trade publications, legal press, broadcast media, and digital platforms in 2025, including top-tier outlets such as *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Guardian*, NPR, CBS News, Reuters, and the Associated Press. Moreover, many reporters proactively sought comment from us, reflecting our increasing influence on key advocacy issues.

Media coverage centered on landmark developments in three areas: 1) The historic $1.5 billion Anthropic copyright settlement, the first settlement in any of the text-based AI litigations (related to the piracy claims only); 2) major legal victories against book-banning laws in Texas, Florida, and Idaho; and 3) our lawsuit over the government's unprecedented and illegal termination of 1,400 NEH grants, which we succeeded in enjoining, pending the outcome of the case. The launch of our Human Authored certification program and CEO Mary Rasenberger's recognition among the "50 Most Influential People in IP" further solidified the Guild's position as the leading voice for authors' rights.

The following is a summary of major coverage themes in 2025. See more media coverage at authorsguild.org/about/ag-in-the-news.

Anthropic Settlement

The Anthropic settlement dominated coverage in 2025, generating more than 50 placements in September alone. While the Authors Guild was not a party to the lawsuit, we have served as an authoritative voice, helping to explain the case to the press and to authors. Mainstream news outlets, as well as those in the tech and entertainment spaces reflected this in their reporting, citing our updates to members and quoting our CEO and staff.

- AP News: AI company Anthropic to pay authors $1.5 billion over pirated books used to train chatbots (also run by *The Guardian*, CBS News, and others)
- NPR: Anthropic settles with authors in first-of-its-kind AI copyright infringement lawsuit
- Publishers Weekly: Tentative Agreement Reached in Anthropic Copyright Lawsuit
- *The Hollywood Reporter*: AI Giant Anthropic to Pay $1.5 Billion to Authors in Landmark Settlement
- TheWrap: Anthropic to Pay $1.5 Billion to Authors Over Book Piracy Used to Train AI Models
- *WIRED*: Anthropic Settles High-Profile AI Copyright Lawsuit Brought by Book Authors
- Ars Technica: "First of its kind" AI settlement: Anthropic to pay authors $1.5 billion
- *Canadian Lawyer* Magazine: Anthropic to fork over US$1.5 billion in watershed settlement with authors over book piracy

OpenAI Litigation

Numerous outlets have covered the progression of our class action suit against OpenAI and Microsoft, including:

- Bloomberg Law: OpenAI Copyright Suit Consolidation Portends Consistency, Risk
- Courthouse News: OpenAI to face authors' ChatGPT copyright infringement claim
- The A.V. Club: Sounds like George R.R. Martin's OpenAI suit is going pretty well for him
- *New York Daily News*: NYC judge: OpenAI must turn over communication with lawyers about deleted databases
- TechCrunch: Key ex-OpenAI researcher subpoenaed in AI copyright case

Meta Litigation

Reporters sought us out as a lawsuit against Meta uncovered how the company pirated millions of copyrighted books to train its AI systems.

- *Vanity Fair*: This Is How Meta AI Staffers Deemed More Than 7 Million Books to Have No "Economic Value"
- Literary Hub: How is Meta Getting Its Hands on Advance Digital Galleys to Train Its AI?

Human Authored Certification

The launch of our Human Authored certification generated strong coverage across tech, trade, and international outlets.

- AP News: Authors Guild sets up 'Human Author' portal to certify books come from 'human intellect'
- *The Verge*: Books written by humans are getting their own certification
- *Publishers Weekly*: Authors Guild Rolls Out 'Human Authored' Certification Program
- *The Guardian*: US Authors Guild to certify books from 'human intellect' rather than AI
- *The Times of London*: Logo on books will show that the author was human—not AI
- Gizmodo: Books Written Without AI Can Now Receive New 'Human Authored' Certification

- *VICE*: 'Human Authored' Book Certifications Are a Thing Now Thanks to AI

AI Licensing

Our 2024 partnership with Created by Humans continued to garner headlines in 2025.

- NPR: Major authors hope new AI licensing site will help them keep control of their books
- *Fortune*: Authors strike back against AI stealing their books as licensing startup Created by Humans raises $5.5 million seed round
- *Publishing Perspectives*: AI Rights for Authors: 'Created by Humans' Launches

Book Banning Advocacy

Our anti-censorship work achieved major legal victories and sustained coverage in both national and local outlets throughout the year.

Texas Lawsuit:

- *Publishers Weekly*: Federal Judge Rules Texas Book Ratings Law Unconstitutional
- Book Riot: Requiring Book Sellers to Rate Content of Books Unconstitutional, Per Federal Judge
- Bloomberg Law: Texas Sex-Content Rating Law for Books Ruled Unconstitutional

Florida Lawsuit:

- MSNBC: Federal judge guts major portion of Florida's book ban, in a blow to DeSantis
- *The Bookseller*: Publishers and authors win US book-banning case in 'sweeping victory for the right to read'
- *Florida Phoenix*: Law banning school library books ruled 'overbroad and unconstitutional'
- The *Advocate*: Florida judge strikes down state law used to ban books: 'None of these books are obscene'
- *School Library Journal*: Judge Rules Part of Florida's School Book Banning Law is Unconstitutional
- Book Riot: "None Of These Books Are Obscene": Judge Strikes Down Much of Florida's Book Ban Bill
- The Conversation: Federal judge overturns part of Florida's book ban law, drawing on nearly 100 years of precedent protecting First Amendment access to ideas

Idaho Lawsuit:

- *The Guardian*: Publishers sue state of Idaho over library book bans
- *Publishers Weekly*: Publishers, Authors Guild Sue State of Idaho Over Book Banning Law
- *The Bookseller*: Big Five publishers band together in legal challenge against library 'book ban'
- K-12 Dive: Publishing giants sue Idaho over state law enabling book bans
- *LGBTQ Nation*: Library & publishers sue Idaho over anti-LGBTQ+ book-banning law

Rhode Island Bill:

- *Publishers Weekly*: In Wake of Court Losses, Rhode Island Codifies 'Right to Read'

NEH Grants Lawsuit

Our lawsuit against the NEH and DOGE drew national attention.

- *The New York Times*: Court Rules Against Arts Endowment on Trump's 'Gender Ideology' Order
- *The New York Times*: Humanities Endowment Funds Trump's Priorities After Ending Old Grants
- *Newsweek*: Donald Trump Hit By Legal Roadblock

- JURIST: US federal judge issues injunction halting Trump administration's cancellation of NEH grants
- Literary Hub: In a new lawsuit, the Authors Guild is going toe to toe with DOGE

Industry Recognition

- Managing IP: 50 most influential people in IP 2025: Mary Rasenberger
- *Publishers Weekly*: PW Notables 2025: Mary Rasenberger

Press Releases

In addition to the statements and media comments we regularly make, we distributed nine press releases announcing notable efforts throughout the year:

- January 13, 2025: Authors Guild Foundation to Honor Robert A. Caro at 33rd Annual Gala
- January 29, 2025: Authors Guild Launches "Human Authored" Certification to Preserve Authenticity in Literature
- March 31, 2025: Authors Guild Foundation Honors Champions of Artistic Freedom: Robert Caro, Sandra Cisneros, and Salman Rushdie
- May 12, 2025: Authors Guild Files Class Action Lawsuit to Reverse Unlawful NEH Grant Terminations
- May 20, 2025: Congress Receives Authors Guild Petition to Defend Copyright Independence with More Than 7,000 Signatures
- June 9, 2025: Leon Levy Foundation Awards $300,000 Grant to the Authors Guild Foundation to Preserve Over 100 Years of Literary Advocacy Archives
- July 31, 2025: WIT 2025 Literary Festival Brings Together Marilynne Robinson, M. Gessen, Hanif Abdurraqib, Bishop Mariann Edgar Budde, and More for Urgent Conversations on Authors & Activism
- September 12, 2025: Wendy Strothman Named President of Authors Guild Foundation as Marie Arana Steps Down for New TV Role
- November 13, 2025: Authors Guild Foundation to Honor Percival Everett, Dr. Carla Hayden, and Amy Tan on April 20, 2026

Social Media

Our social media reach continued to expand. We stopped posting on X (formerly Twitter) in mid-2025, but our total number of followers on Instagram, Threads, Bluesky, Facebook, and LinkedIn grew 11.8 percent. Instagram (+1,269), Bluesky (+787), and Threads (+641) all experienced steady growth.

We mixed up our social media content strategy in 2025, increasing our use of memes and other "fun" content in addition to resources for authors and advocacy info, especially around AI and book censorship. We also began ongoing series including Submission Sundays (where we round up weekly submission deadlines) and Prose and Cons (a look at how authors are adapting to modern-day challenges). The result was immediate and encouraging as we totaled 3.56 million impressions across all platforms, a 23-percent increase over the year before.

Follow Us on Social Media

Instagram: @authorsguild
Threads: @authorsguild
Bluesky: @authorsguild.org
Facebook: facebook.com/AuthorsGuild
LinkedIn: linkedin.com/company/the-authors-guild

The Authors Guild Foundation

Educational Programming

The Authors Guild Foundation produces educational programs that are open to the public as part of its mission to equip writers from all backgrounds with the professional knowledge and tools they need to succeed and earn a livelihood.

Along with our members-only programs, our educational events are developed to provide foundational information about the publishing industry and authorhood, while also responding to trending topics and our audience's needs. The most popular webinars are those that provide practical advice for publishing and promoting books and those that address our unique expertise on authors' rights and legal issues.

In the last year, these programs reached more than **50,000 attendees** across nearly **60 events**. Our virtual events reach a broad audience of writers, with an average of more than **400 live attendees per webinar**—from niche audiences of 100 to well over 1,000 writers attending some of our most in-demand programs. Thousands more benefitted from the recordings in our resource library.

We also traveled to conferences and festivals around the country to speak on copyright, AI, and other pillars of our advocacy work. We often share recaps of these events in our email newsletter and on our website.

The following is a summary of educational programs in 2025.

Agent Talks

We again partnered with Literary Agents of Change, a nonprofit that was born out of the American Association of Literary Agents (AALA)'s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee to help dismantle the barriers to entry into a career as a literary agent for members of historically underrepresented groups. Our second season of Agent Talks featured rising star literary agents sharing their industry expertise and answering audience questions on a variety of topics.

- April 18, 2025: Building the Perfect Graphic Novel Pitch with Paloma Hernando and moderator Tamara Kawar
- May 1, 2025: Children's Book Marketing & Publicity with Sally M. Kim and moderator Samantha Fabien
- May 28, 2025: Managing Expectations and Rejections with Sheyla Knigge and moderator Sarah Khalil
- May 29, 2025: Subsidiary Rights: Foreign, Film, & More with Saribel Pages, Paula Weiman, and moderator Kyle Maxey
- August 22, 2025: What Makes a Picture Book Work with Vicky Weber and moderator Tamara Kawar

Business Bootcamps for Writers

Our popular Bootcamps series helps prepare you for each stage in an author's career: the paths to publication, promoting your work, and managing your writing business. This past year, we covered genre-specific topics for nonfiction writers, translators, and more and offered deep-dive talks on promotion and podcasting.

Partner organizations help strengthen the Bootcamps series by bringing us an eclectic mix of guest speakers with unique expertise. Collaborators in 2025 included the Alliance of Independent Authors (ALLi), the American Literary Translators Association (ALTA), Blue Stoop, and the Institute of American Indian Arts.

- April 23, 2025: How to Book Podcasts as an Author with Michelle Glogovac
- May 9, 2025: Nonfiction Proposals: What Agents & Editors Want with Jane Chun, Robin Coleman, Ismita Hussain, and moderator Ariel Curry
- May 16, 2025: Path to Publication: Literary Translation with Kristen Vida Alfaro, Alexa Frank, Sarah Gale, Chad Post, and moderator Chenxin Jiang
- May 21, 2025: Breaking into Writing for TV & Film with Bryson Chun, DezBaa', Ryan Redcorn, and moderator Deborah Taffa
- May 22, 2025: Co-Authoring Nonfiction: Strategies for Successful Collaboration with Matty Dalrymple and Michael La Ronn
- August 27, 2025: How & Where to Find Your Readers with Andréa Guevara
- March 12, 2026: Amplify Your Story: How Writers Are Building Literary Visibility with Camille U. Adams, Freda Epum, Ananda Lima, and moderator Leslie-Ann Murray

Educational Webinars

In a year of sea changes throughout the industry, we devoted much of our educational programming to address current events in publishing. From the proliferation of scams targeting authors to the latest developments on the AI front, our general programming served many thousands of authors with much-needed, real-time information.

- March 20, 2025: AI Rights Licensing 101 with Created by Humans with Trip Adler, Jen Singerman, Mark Bryant, and Mary Rasenberger
- April 16, 2025: AI Rights Licensing 101 with Created by Humans with Trip Adler, Jen Singerman, Mark Bryant, and Mary Rasenberger
- May 14, 2025: Translation Contracts 101 with Umair Kazi and Kyle Maxey
- May 27, 2025: Publisher Bankruptcy: What Authors Should Know with Marc Hirschfield, Umair Kazi, and Kyle Maxey
- May 30, 2025: AI Rights Licensing 101 with Created by Humans with Trip Adler, Jen Singerman, Mark Bryant, and Umair Kazi
- August 6, 2025: Inside a Scam: What Happened at PageTurner Press with Brent Crane and Cheryl Davis
- August 19, 2025: *Authors Guild v. NEH*: Next Steps in the Legal Process with Jamie Crooks and Mary Rasenberger
- September 11, 2025: The AI Revolution in Book Publishing with Thad McIlroy and moderator Umair Kazi
- October 3, 2025: AI RIghts Licensing 101 with Created by Humans and Douglas Preston with Trip Adler, Douglas Preston and Mary Rasenberger
- October 14, 2025: Helping Authors Detect Cyber Scams with Chris Kayser and Cheryl Davis
- October 16, 2025: Anthropic Settlement: What Authors Should Know with Rachel Geman, Rohit Nath, and Mary Rasenberger
- October 22, 2025: Copyright 101 with RightsClick with David Newhoff, Steven Tepp, Kevin Amer
- November 5, 2025: Making Sense of 21st-Century Publishing with Michael Castleman and moderator Mary Rasenberger

- November 13, 2025: Must-Know Copyright Basics for Authors with Kevin Amer, Kyle Maxey, and Mary Rasenberger
- December 4, 2025: Getting Your Rights Back: Rights Reversions & Grant Terminations with Michael Gross, Kyle Maxey, and Mary Rasenberger
- January 13, 2026: Anthropic Settlement Q&A with the Class Counsel with Michael Adamson, Rachel Geman, and moderator Umair Kazi
- January 27, 2026: Teach What You Know: How to Create Your Own Virtual Workshops with Esmé Weijun Wang

Festival & Conference Partnerships

The Guild and Foundation participate in major literary events around the country to raise awareness of our member services and our advocacy work. We typically assemble panels featuring Guild staff and industry experts addressing business and legal issues.

We are a literary partner for the AWP Conference & Bookfair, the largest literary gathering in North America, and have a notable presence there every year. Following the 2025 conference in Los Angeles, we recently attended the 2026 event in Baltimore to promote our work and reach countless emerging writers. In addition to hosting a featured event and two educational panels, we also offered legal "office hours" at our booth, where our legal team chatted with conferencegoers about their legal questions and concerns.

Conference programming in the last year included:

- June 18, 2025: ThrillerFest/CraftFest: Contracts 101 with Cheryl Davis
- September 13, 2025: Latinx Storytellers Conference: Legal Clinic with Cheryl Davis
- January 17, 2026: TBR Conference: The Robot Overlords Are Coming: The State of AI in the Writing World with Nichole Bernier, Umair Kazi, Ed Nawotka, Ellen Ruppel Shell, and moderator Mark Cecil
- March 5, 2026: AWP: How to Resist AI in Writing & Teaching with Alex Hanna, Carmen Maria Machado, Vauhini Vara, and moderator Umair Kazi
- March 6, 2026: AWP: Know Your Rights: What to Look for in Book Contracts with Amy Bishop-Wycisk, Kyle Maxey, Jaime Wolf, and moderator Mary Rasenberger
- March 6, 2026: AWP Featured Event: Laura Lippman and Sujata Massey in Conversation with Angie Kim
- March 12, 2026: London Book Festival: Mission Impossible? Protecting Authors' Rights in the Age of AI with Umair Kazi, Francesca Nojavra, and moderator Anna Ganley

We also sponsored the Horror Writers Association's annual conference, StokerCon; had a table at the Griot & Grey Owl Black Southern Writers Conference; and took out an ad in the ThrillerFest conference guidebook.

From Manuscript to Marketplace

This long-running series spotlights an author of a recent book in conversation with members of their publishing team, providing a candid look at the publishing process from acquisition to launch. We only held one From Manuscript to Marketplace event this past year, but we look forward to continuing the series in the year ahead.

- December 9, 2025: From Manuscript to Marketplace: *Ravishing* with Eshani Surya, Roxane Gay, and Dana Murphy

Money Matters

With host Erin Lowry, our series on personal finances tackled a wide range of topics: the economics of royalties and advances, taking control of your budgeting, and diversifying your income in the current market conditions. Authors have particular concerns around money, especially those without traditional "day job" employment, and we encourage all to watch Money Matters events that are relevant to your needs.

- April 17, 2025: Turbulent Markets: Bracing for Volatile Financial Times and Recession Fears with Erin Lowry
- April 28, 2025: Managing Financial Anxiety for Authors with Amanda Clayman, Uchechi Kalu, and moderator Erin Lowry
- May 12, 2025: What I Wish I'd Known Before Publishing with Kara Perez, Rebecca Thorne, and moderator Erin Lowry
- August 11, 2025: Know Your Worth Then Charge It with Uchechi Kalu and Erin Lowry
- August 25, 2025: Yes, You Can Budget as a Writer with Uchechi Kalu and Erin Lowry
- September 15, 2025: How to Invest your Earnings and Invest Ethically with Uchechi Kalu and Erin Lowry
- September 22, 2025: Book Royalties: What Authors Should Know with Gina Denny and Erin Lowry
- October 23, 2025: Debt Management Strategies for Authors & Freelancers with Erin Lowry and Uchechi Kalu
- January 14, 2026: Money Isn't the Worst! Personal Finance 101 for Creatives with Erin Lowry
- February 2, 2026: Teaching for Income with Scott Broker, Ariana Brown, Noah Ashley Blooms, and moderator Erin Lowry

Pascal Hall Authors Series and Residency

The Pascal Hall Authors Series and residency, generously sponsored by the Lesher Family Foundation, takes place each summer in Rockport, Maine, featuring four writers of diverse genres. Each author is invited for a one-week residency to work or relax, alone or with their families, in exchange for one conversation event that is free and open to the public

In 2025, Rockport's vibrant literary community came together for four sold-out, inspiring conversations.

- June 18, 2025: Karla Cornejo Villavicencio in conversation with Caitlin Shetterly
- July 16, 2025: Emily Wilson in conversation with Barbara Weiden Boyd
- August 6, 2025: Patrick Radden Keefe in conversation with Lynn Boulger
- August 27, 2025: Amitav Ghosh in conversation with Palak Taneja

The fifth series will take place this summer with Heather McGhee (June 11), Susan Choi (July 9), Hernan Diaz (August 20), and Stephen Greenblatt (August 27).

Literary Programming

In 2025, our literary programming brought writers and readers together through a vibrant mix of signature and in-person events. We continued to build the James Baldwin series as a space for timely, substantive conversation, while expanding opportunities for audiences to engage with authors face-to-face through intimate gatherings and talks. We also produced the WIT Literary Festival, reaffirming our commitment to celebrating literature in community and creating moments of connection that carry forward beyond a single event.

Plays

The Foundation commissioned and co-presented two plays in 2025:

- May 19, 2025: Danez Smith's *2015* at the Pillsbury Theater in Minneapolis
- August 9, 2025: Aracelis Girmay's *An Experiment in Voices* at the Tanglewood Linde Center in Lenox, Massachusetts

Online Literary Seminar: Reading James Baldwin

- February 26, 2025: Jesse McCarthy—An Introduction
- March 18, 2025: Colm Tóibín on *Go Tell It on the Mountain*
- April 24, 2025: Imani Perry on "Sonny's Blues" & "The Uses of the Blues"
- May 21, 2025: W. Ralph Eubanks and Eddie Glaude, Jr. on *Notes of a Native Son*
- June 26, 2025: Viet Thanh Nguyen on *No Name in the Street*
- July 24, 2025: Rachel Cohen on Baldwin and Delaney
- August 21, 2025: Vinson Cunningham on *Another Country*
- November 20, 2025: Ayana Mathis on *The Fire Next Time*

WIT Literary Festival

The WIT Literary Festival took place September 25–28, 2025, in the Berkshires. This year's theme was The Power of Words: Authors and Activism, with the following mainstage programming:

- M. Gessen and Michael S. Roth in conversation with Alia Malek
- James Lawler and Tim Weiner in conversation with Garrett M. Graff
- Catherine Coleman Flowers and Peter Hotez in conversation with Jeremy S. Faust
- Torrey Peters and Chase Strangio in conversation with Andrea Long Chu
- Branden Jacobs-Jenkins and Sanaz Toossi in conversation with Vinson Cunningham
- Hanif Abdurraqib and Imani Perry in conversation with Shana L. Redmond
- David W. Blight and Deval Patrick in conversation with Imani Perry
- Bishop Mariann Edgar Budde and Marilynne Robinson in conversation with Paul Elie

THE AUTHORS GUILD FOUNDATION

Fundraising

2025 was a strong and successful year for the Foundation's fundraising efforts. We raised **more than $3 million** overall, with total revenue exceeding what we had budgeted by **17 percent**. This growth was driven by several core initiatives, including the Gala, ongoing general fundraising and major gifts, and a focused year-end campaign.

To support this momentum and strengthen our development infrastructure, we welcomed a new development associate, who manages the donor database, oversees gift processing and acknowledgments, and provides essential support for fundraising events, and promoted our development manager to assistant director of development.

Gala

The 2025 Gala was a resounding success, surpassing our fundraising goal and setting a record for the Foundation. We **raised more than $660,000**—a 22-percent increase over the previous year—providing critical support for the Guild's work and our free educational programming for writers.

In addition to the fundraising success, we were proud to honor Robert A. Caro, Sandra Cisneros, and Salman Rushdie at an unforgettable evening hosted by former *Saturday Night Live* star Ego Nwodim. More than 350 guests gathered at Gotham Hall to celebrate literary excellence and the defense of free expression.

Building on this momentum, the 2026 Gala will take place on April 20 at Cipriani Wall Street, honoring Percival Everett, Dr. Carla Hayden, and Amy Tan.

Major Gifts

Beyond the Gala, individual giving remains the Foundation's primary source of support. During the year, we were fortunate to receive several major gifts of $25,000 or more from distinguished writers and committed supporters of the Guild and the Foundation, including a significant contribution dedicated to advancing our fight against book bans.

We were also honored to receive a leadership grant from the Leon Levy Foundation to launch the Authors Guild Archive Project. While the Guild's ideals and impact over its 110-year history are well documented, its institutional records have not always received the care and accessibility they deserve. This grant initiates a vital investment in preserving and strengthening our shared history by organizing and improving access to the Guild's archives and ensuring that this legacy informs and fortifies our work today and in the future.

Year-End Drive

We made a concerted effort to strengthen our year-end giving, and those efforts paid off. Thanks to the generosity of our members and supporters, year-end contributions more than doubled over 2024, resulting in $200,000 in unrestricted support to advance the Guild's work.

The Authors Registry & The Authors League Fund

The Authors Registry

The Authors Registry was created in 1995 to distribute fees and royalties collected in foreign jurisdictions on behalf of U.S.-taxpaying authors for photocopying and electronic use in educational, business, and governmental institutions, as well as for library lending payments which had not previously been paid out to U.S.-taxpaying authors and their beneficiaries.

These funds arrive from a variety of sources, with most currently coming from the U.K.'s Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society, which collects fees for secondary uses of copyrighted work, such as photocopies, cable retransmissions, digital reproductions, and educational recordings, throughout the U.K. In addition, the Authors Registry disburses fees collected by Lira, which sends the Authors Registry royalties for U.S. authors from libraries under the Netherlands' Public Lending Right.

In 2025, the Authors Registry distributed over $2.7 million to more than 6,500 payees. To date, the Registry has distributed more than $47.3 million to American authors and their beneficiaries.

The Authors League Fund

The Authors League Fund was founded in 1917 to help authors, journalists, poets, and dramatists during financial emergencies. The Fund provides direct aid for urgent needs, such as rent or mortgage payments, utilities, groceries, and medical bills. In 2025, the Fund provided $592,500 to 112 writers.

The Authors League Fund is a sister organization to the Authors Guild, and it encourages Guild members to apply for support if needed and to spread the word about its assistance to fellow writers. The Authors League Fund helps any writer living in the U.S. and American writers living abroad. Authors Guild membership is not required. Apply online at authorsleaguefund.org.

The Authors Guild
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