



LUCKY JEFFERSON

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

January 1, 2024, to December 31, 2024

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Publishing Social Change: A Letter From Our Founder

LUCKY JEFFERSON

Dear Friends,

This past year has been one of extraordinary growth and creativity for Lucky Jefferson. From publishing the bold voices of emerging authors to connecting young creators with opportunities to share their work, we've continued to push boundaries and build a vibrant, inclusive literary community.

Highlights include publishing 94 writers across seven distinct collections, launching our groundbreaking specialized publications *Foraneo* and *Wildflower*, serving 133 writers through

our educational programs, and expanding our community-centered research that directly informs new programming. Our “**Beyond the Frame: Justice-Impacted Photography**” exhibition and comprehensive workshops exemplify our commitment to reimagining literature to center modern readers and creators from all backgrounds.

These successes wouldn't have been possible without the dedication of our volunteers and the unwavering support of our partners, including the Amazon Literary Partnership, Hyde Park Art Center, DePaul University, Chicago Cultural Center,

and Illinois Humanities.

Thank you for being part of our journey as we redefine the literary landscape, one story at a time.

Sincerely,

NaBeela Washington
Founder & Editor-in-Chief



Our Mission:

Disrupting Traditions, Centering

Lucky Jefferson's mission is simple: we publish social change. Our vision is to see literature reimagined to center modern readers. We organize collaborative community experiences that disrupt oppressive traditions in publishing; we take pride in centering writers and artists while cultivating inclusive representation in literature and art. In 2021, Lucky Jefferson incorporated to become a 501(c)(3) nonprofit.

130-140

Individual literary works

133

writers served through
publications and workshops

7

Distinct publications serving
specialized communities

400+

contest entries



10,155

Social Media Followers

500+

Newsletter Subscribers

94

Writers published authors
across all collections

Direct payments to
contributors ranging

\$15-50
Per work
\$200

in contest awards

≈600+≈

submissions received

Celebrating Unrepresented Voices: New Specialized Collections



Foraneo

Our first Latin-focused publication
featuring 11 works from 9 writers



Ember

Environmental justice publication
with 28 works from 26 writers



Awake (Sixth Edition)

Second print iteration
amplifying 9 Black writers



Wildflower

Groundbreaking collection
centering 8 disabled and
autistic creators

Established Platforms

365 Collection
Digital platform
featuring 36 authors with
experimental work



Little Jefferson
Youth publication showcasing
4 works from writers ages 9-13

Our Community-Centered Research

Illinois Humanities Research Partnership

Building on our Research Lab launched in 2023 with support from Illinois Humanities, we significantly expanded our community-centered research in 2024. Our research lab surveyed over 200 writers and artists to understand the systemic challenges they face in publishing and the arts. Our groundbreaking data reveals the scope of exclusion in creative industries:



63%

of Illinois-based respondents
have faced bias in publishing

More than

50%

struggled to find creative
opportunities designed for
BIPOC artists

2.2%

of museum acquisitions
between 2008-2020 featured
Black American artists (Burns
Halperin Report, 2022)

From Data to Direct Action

Our research doesn't stay in reports; it transforms into programming that addresses documented barriers. Because of these findings, we're creating direct pathways for BIPOC writers and artists to be published, exhibited, and heard, without compromising their creative voice. Our research has led to expanded publishing opportunities, free submission contests, and interdisciplinary programs that question and challenge industry norms.

Industry Impact & Advocacy

Our research lab produces benchmark data that arts organizations, publishers, and advocates use to push for long-term change. This data not only preserves and documents BIPOC artistic traditions but also ensures that future artists and writers have concrete industry insights to navigate creative industries successfully.

Justice-Impacted Artists: Beyond the

Photography as Liberation

In partnership with Buddy at the Chicago Cultural Center, we launched “Beyond the Frame: Justice-Impacted Photography,” an exhibition featuring formerly incarcerated artists. In a country where 1 in 5 prisoners worldwide is incarcerated in the U.S., creative outlets are often a lifeline for rebuilding self-identity. This exhibit explores what it means to move beyond judgment and systemic barriers through photography.

4

free photography workshops
served justice-impacted artists

77.8%

expressed interest in exploring
professional publishing
opportunities

Art Workshops

provided tools for self-expression, community
healing, and skill-building

Featured Artists Making History

Our exhibition proudly featured the work of Josephine Horace-Jackson, Pablo Mendoza, Marketta Sims, Paxton Anthony Murphy, and Chelsea Chism-Vargas—artists whose voices and perspectives expand what we understand about resilience, healing, and creative expression.

88.9%

of participants sought feedback
on improving their portfolios

Leadership That Understands Exclusion

Our leadership isn't just about visibility—it means that the people making decisions about our programs understand firsthand what it's like to be excluded from creative spaces. Lucky Jefferson isn't here to check boxes. We're building spaces where BIPOC writers and artists can shape literature and art on their own terms—without interference, without erasure, and without having to fit into someone else's idea of what's "publishable" or "worthy."



Building Literary Communities: Educational Impact

Virtual Programming

National Poetry Month Series:
Three virtual workshops serving
34 writers

Recognition & Awards

Annual Poetry & Prose Contest:
Awarded \$100 each to two
outstanding writers from
400+ submissions

Gratitude

Our Publishing Partners



Community Champions

We are deeply grateful for our volunteers, contributors, and community partners who made 2024 possible through their dedication to amplifying diverse voices in literature and the arts.

Financial Transparency

Investing in Writers

Revenue: \$28,368

Grants & Foundations	\$ 26,550	93.6 %
Individual Donations	\$416	1.5 %
Publication Sales	\$ 1,357	4.8%
Other Revenue	\$ 45	0.1%



Expenses: \$7,705

Author Compensation and Programs	\$ 5,050	65.5 %
Publication Production	\$343	4.5 %
Operations and Technology	\$ 362	4.7%
Educational Programming	\$ 1,950	25.3%

Net Assets: \$20,663 (after liabilities)

2025

Expanding Our Literary Revolution



Next year, we aim to...

- Launch 15 West, a hyperlocal newsroom serving Berwyn, Cicero, and West Side Chicago communities, and a News Accessibility Survey
- Debut our photography fellowship program, bridging visual and written storytelling
- Launch radical zine-making workshops with community partners like Hyde Park Art Center
- Increase author compensation rates across all publications
- Expand our accessibility research partnership with DePaul University
- Serve 200+ writers through enhanced programming
- Continue disrupting oppressive publishing traditions while centering modern readers



Thank you to our contributors, supporters,
and community for making 2024 a year of
groundbreaking literary work.

Together, we're building a publishing ecosystem
where every voice has power.

Connect With Us

luckyjefferson.com | submissions@luckyjefferson.com | [@luckyjefferson](https://www.instagram.com/luckyjefferson) across social platforms