

Statement and letter for our various stakeholders:

It is with great sadness that the Board of Directors of the Tucson Festival of Books has chosen to cancel the 2020 Tucson Festival of Books. We know the Festival of Books brings much joy to many in our community as well as visitors from around the country. Unfortunately, we find ourselves in a situation this year where we are unable to provide a quality festival for several reasons:

Amid concerns over the Coronavirus (COVID-19) we have experienced more than 100 author cancellations; authors have expressed deep regret that they will not be able to spend the weekend with us. This has deeply affected our author panel schedule and we anticipate more changes and cancellations will be forthcoming. This leaves us with little or no way to plan for author panels or to communicate effectively with the public about those changes.

Over the weekend, our board initially made the decision to make the 2020 festival a “touch free” festival, meaning that authors would not be shaking hands/hugging or taking selfies with festival goers. As a result, we had to cancel the interactive, hands-on activities and tours in Science City, and modify many activities in the children’s area, again diminishing the festival experience.

There is also no reliable manner to gauge our level of volunteerism given the public concerns over COVID-19. The festival is reliant on these volunteers to provide logistical support and combined with the author cancellations this could become very difficult to manage.

We realize that this change in course is significant for the Tucson community, our financial supporters, exhibitors, food vendors and other partners. We appreciate your patience and understanding as we work with you over the next few weeks on sorting through the ramifications of this difficult decision. The committee who you worked with to arrange your support/presence at the festival will be in touch in the coming days to work with you on your needs. Please be patient as they reach out to you as soon as possible.

The Tucson Festival of Books looks forward to announcing the date for the 2021 festival. We will continue to support literacy in Southern Arizona in the years to come and have donated \$2 million to date. We thank the public, our supporters and our volunteers for their understanding and cooperation during this unprecedented situation and for their commitment to supporting literacy.