

# NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

PROMOTING THE CREATIVE ECONOMY AND ARTS PARTICIPATION FOR ALL

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## ACTION NEEDED

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### We urge Congress to:

- Continue bipartisan support and allocate **at least \$209 million for the National Endowment for the Arts in the FY 2026 Interior Appropriations bill.**
- Support continued **equal funding for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH).**
- Build a path to index **funding for the NEA and NEH each at \$1 per capita**, an increase from the current 61 cents per capita.

## THE NEA: AMERICA'S LEAD SUPPORTER OF THE ARTS

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The NEA plays a unique role in broadening access to the cultural, educational, and economic benefits of the arts in every Congressional District. **The arts boost economic productivity, improve education outcomes, foster civic cohesion, facilitate good health, and preserve our cherished heritage and traditions.**

The NEA's impact goes beyond grantmaking. It supports community projects and local jobs, spurs creativity and innovation, and conducts important national data collection and research about arts participation. The NEA is the federal agency primarily responsible for representing a \$151.7 billion nonprofit arts and culture industry. As the largest public funder of the arts and a leader in arts education in the United States, the NEA reaches communities often underserved by private dollars, and its awards generate support from other sources, including private foundations, corporate donors, and individual contributors.

## THE NEA IS AN EXTRAORDINARY EXAMPLE OF EFFECTIVE FEDERAL LEADERSHIP AND STATE, REGIONAL, AND LOCAL PARTNERSHIP

- The NEA awards 60% of its grantmaking budget to arts organizations and 40% to state and regional arts agencies,
- It annually makes about 2,300 grants, benefiting every Congressional District. The majority of grants go to small and medium-sized organizations (budgets less than \$2 million) and support projects that increase audience access to arts programming.
- 35% of NEA grants take place in high-poverty urban and rural communities. Approximately 4,000 communities of all sizes are served each year through NEA grants, with many projects bringing the arts to geographically underserved areas.
- Around 41 million Americans annually attend live arts events supported by the NEA, including approximately 36,000 concerts, readings, and performances, and 6,000 exhibitions. Millions more attend these events and access other artistic and educational experiences online.
- Federal agencies and nonprofit organizations partner with the NEA on national initiatives, using the arts as a platform for enhancing the quality of life for all. Such partnership examples include: Creative Forces, Shakespeare in American Communities, Blue Star Museums, NEA Big Read, Poetry Out Loud, and the Citizens' Institute on Rural Design.
- The NEA is an integral part of the celebration of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, serving on the nonpartisan U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission Task Force and offering grantmaking support for this initiative across the nation.

## THE NEA PROVIDES A HIGH RETURN ON INVESTMENT

- The ratio of private and other public funds far surpasses the required non-federal match of at least 1:1. More than \$500 million annually has been generated in matching support, illustrating why federal support for the arts is uniquely valuable. NEA funding is a critical backbone of support that leverages state and local investment in the arts.
- The Bureau of Economic Analysis and the NEA together calculate the arts and culture sector's contributions to the gross domestic product. In 2023, **arts and culture added over \$1.2 trillion, or 4.2%, to national GDP**, and nationwide employment in the sector increased to a total of 5.4 million arts and cultural jobs. The arts are also a powerful export industry boasting a trade surplus of \$36.8 billion in 2023.
- Arts & Economic Prosperity 6 (AEP6) is an economic and social impact study of the nation's nonprofit arts and culture industry. Nationally, the sector generated \$151.7 billion of economic activity in 2022—\$73.3 billion in spending by nonprofit arts and culture organizations and an additional \$78.4 billion in event-related expenditures by their audiences. This economic activity supported 2.6 million jobs, provided \$101 billion in personal income to residents, and generated \$29.1 billion in tax revenue to local, state, and federal governments.

## THE NEA BROADENS ARTS PARTICIPATION FOR ALL AMERICANS

- Congress directs the NEA to ensure that priority is given to providing services or awarding assistance for projects, productions, workshops, or programs that expand arts participation by underserved populations. Moreover, a significant percentage of grants benefit those who have fewer opportunities to participate in the arts by offering free or reduced-price performances and programming specifically serving students in urban and rural schools.
- The NEA supports military families through its Creative Forces program, a collaboration with the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs to serve the unique and special needs of military patients and veterans diagnosed with traumatic brain injury (TBI) and psychological health conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Since 2022, the Creative Forces initiative has awarded more than 100 Creative Forces Community Engagement grants to fund nonclinical art programs for active military members, veterans, reservists, and family/caregivers across the nation, including in Anchorage, AK; Lemmon, SD; and Hillsboro, WV.
- The NEA also makes additional investments to support Native arts and culture by providing grants to Native American, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian communities and organizations for a wide range of arts activities, from traditional to contemporary arts. Working with Native-led national service organizations and an interagency federal working group, the NEA has carried out strategic outreach to Native communities and artists since 2016 and works in consultation with federally recognized tribes.
- With data showing the growth of America's aging population (from 13.1% to 16.9% in the past decade), the NEA is promoting positive physical and mental health outcomes by supporting creative aging projects and wellness programs that teach traditional arts knowledge to the next generation.
- Since 2019, the NEA has established and cultivated ongoing relationships with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), building capacity for successful applications, and has made recent grants to HBCUs, including to support an opera training workshop for undergraduate and graduate students in Jackson State University (MS).
- The NEA funds projects that help children and youth acquire knowledge and skills in the arts and apply the arts to learning in other subjects. It also supports educational programs for adults, collaborations between state arts agencies and state education agencies, and partnerships between arts institutions and K-12 and college and university educators.