

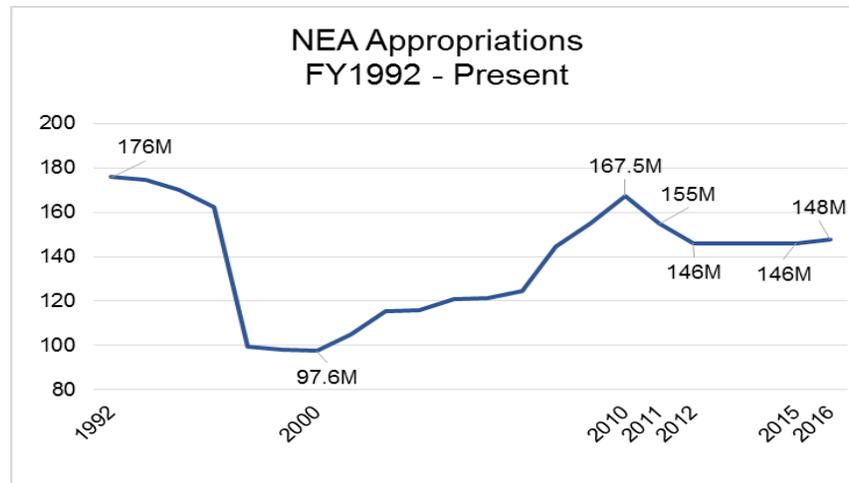
THE NATIONAL OPERA CENTER AMERICA

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS (NEA) PROMOTING CREATIVITY AND PUBLIC ACCESS TO THE ARTS

ACTION NEEDED

We urge Congress to:

- Continue bipartisan support with a budget of \$155 million for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) in the FY 2018 Interior Appropriations bill in order to preserve access to the cultural, educational, and economic benefits of the arts and to advance creativity and innovation in communities across the United States.



FEDERAL SUPPORT FOR THE ARTS IS UNIQUELY VALUABLE

The NEA's mission is to *strengthen the creative capacity of our communities by providing all Americans with diverse opportunities for arts participation.*

The NEA vision is a *nation in which every American benefits from arts engagement, and every community recognizes and celebrates its aspirations and achievements through the arts.* The goals of the agency include the creation of art meeting the highest standards of excellence, engaging the public with diverse and excellent art, and promoting public knowledge and understanding about the contributions of the arts in our national life and public discourse. Furthermore, the agency conducts essential research about trends relating to arts participation.

The NEA is America's chief supporter of the arts and celebrates the arts as a national priority, critical to America's future. The arts have the power to transport audiences, unite communities, promote empathy and understanding, and humanize difference. Arts organizations, at their best, serve as town halls in both rural and urban communities throughout the country, welcoming a diverse set of identities into a shared experience.

The Endowment's goals are fulfilled primarily through direct grants, reviewed and recommended by panels of experts, to arts organizations across the country. In FY 2016, these grants:

- Reached more than 20 million people attending live arts events through NEA-supported programs (exclusive of television and radio broadcast audiences). These included approximately 30,000 concerts, readings, and performances, and more than 3,000 exhibitions.
- Reached an additional 300 million people through television, radio, and cable broadcasts.

- Impacted almost 16,000 communities engaged in NEA-supported projects, many benefiting from touring and outreach initiatives.
- Generated more than \$500 million in matching support.

NEA—THREE KEY BENEFITS

PROVIDES HIGH RETURN ON INVESTMENT

- The NEA's budget is \$148 million (under a Continuing Resolution for FY17) -- just 0.004 percent of the federal budget and 47 cents per capita.
- The ratio of private and other public funds matching every NEA grant dollar will approach 9:1, far surpassing the required non-federal match of at least one to one.
- The nonprofit arts industry supports 4.13 million jobs in the arts and related industries. The Bureau of Economic Analysis and the NEA together calculated the arts and culture sector's contributions to the gross domestic product at 4.2 percent, which amounts to an impressive \$729 billion.

SUPPORTS PARTNERSHIPS THAT ADVANCE THE ARTS AND COMMUNITIES

- NEA supports military families by partnering with Blue Star Families to present Blue Star Museums, which offers free admission to active-duty military and their families, and Blue Star Theatres, which offers free and discounted tickets to active-duty military and veterans and their families, along with access to education programs and special events for military families. The NEA recently expanded the Creative Forces: NEA Military Healing Arts Network, which is a collaboration with the Department of Defense that supports music, writing, and visual art therapy at military care facilities.
- The NEA funds school- and community-based programs that help children and youth acquire knowledge and skills in the arts. 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/university educators.

BROADENS ACCESS TO ALL

- The NEA is the only arts funder in America, public or private, that supports the arts in 50 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories. In fact, every congressional district benefits from an NEA grant.
- The NEA funds nonprofits throughout the country and has an exemplary partnership with the states, with 40 percent of program funds distributed through state arts agencies. This federal-state partnership supports tens of thousands of grants in communities all throughout the U.S.
- The **Challenge America** category specifically offers support for projects that extend the reach of the arts to populations whose opportunities to experience the arts are limited by geography, economics, or disability.
- NEA grants are awarded through national initiatives, including **Art Works** which supports the creation of art that meets the highest standards of excellence, public engagement with diverse and excellent art, lifelong learning in the arts, and the strengthening of communities through the arts. The NEA **Our Town** grant program supports creative placemaking projects that help to transform communities into lively, beautiful, and sustainable places with the arts at their core. The **Big Read** initiative brings together partners across the country to encourage reading for pleasure and enlightenment as well as supporting innovative reading programs in selected communities. The **Creativity Connects** pilot grant opportunity supports partnerships between arts organizations and organizations from non-arts sectors. Those sectors may include business, education, environment, faith, finance, food, health, law, science, and technology.