

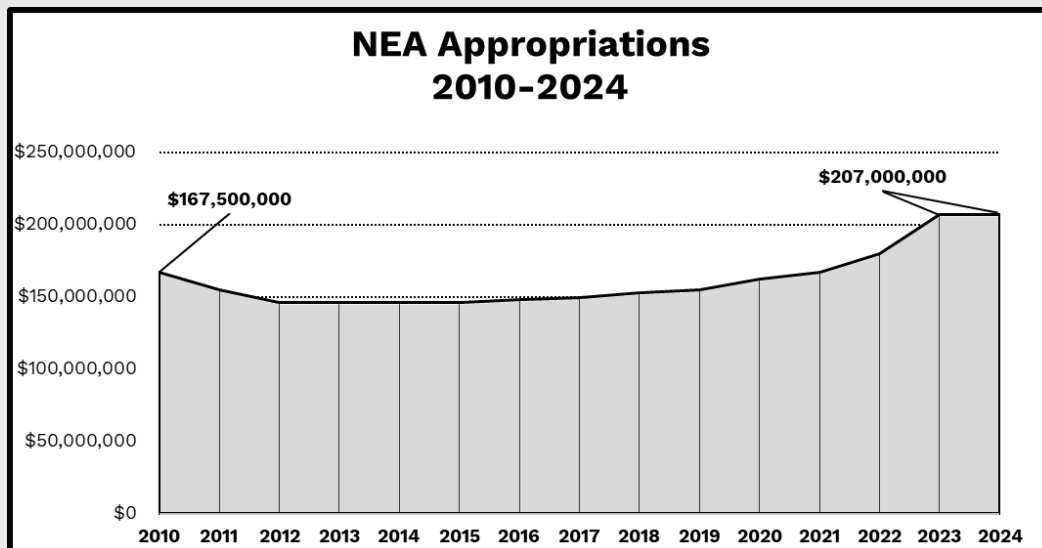
NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS (NEA)

Promoting Creativity and Public Access to the Arts

ACTION NEEDED

We urge Congress to:

- Continue bipartisan support and robust funding for the National Endowment for the Arts in the FY 2025 Interior Appropriations bill for at least \$211 million to broaden access to the cultural, educational, and economic benefits of the arts and to advance creativity and innovation in communities across the United States.
- We support continued parity between NEA and NEH funding. We encourage the Subcommittee to build a specific path to index funding for the National Endowment for the Arts and National Endowment for the Humanities at \$1 per capita. Each agency is currently funded at about 61 cents per capita.



THE NEA: AMERICA'S LEAD SUPPORTER OF THE ARTS

The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) plays a unique role in broadening access to and participation in the arts in every congressional district and should be fully supported to expand and deepen its impact on our communities and our democracy. The arts sector is an economic engine which brings people together and helps to uplift, engage, educate, and innovate. The NEA can help leverage the arts sector to play a key role in the work to imagine and build a new American economy that reflects the diversity of our communities and art forms.

The Endowment fulfills its goals through awarding 60% of its grantmaking budget to arts organizations while awarding 40% to state and regional arts agencies, an extraordinary example of federal/state partnership. Key facts about the NEA:

- It annually recommends about 2,300 grants, reaching 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 Arts Endowment grants take place in high-poverty neighborhoods.
- 35% of grants reach low-income audiences of under-resourced populations such as people with disabilities, people in institutions, and Veterans.
- Federal agencies and nonprofit organizations partner with the Arts Endowment on national initiatives, using the arts as a platform for enhancing the quality of life for all. Such partnership examples include: Creative Forces, Poetry Out Loud, Musical Theater Songwriting Challenge, NEA Big Read, Blue Star Museums, and the Citizens' Institute on Rural Design.

- Approximately 4,000 communities are served each year through NEA grants, with many grant programs designed to tour to surrounding areas as well. Around 41 million Americans annually attend a live arts event 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.
- In 2021, the NEA managed a recovery fund of \$135 million provided through the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act. The first \$52 million (40%) was granted through the state arts agencies. The remaining \$80 million was allocated to 633 arts organizations and local arts agencies to help the arts and cultural sector recover from the pandemic. The NEA received more than 7,500 eligible applications requesting \$695 million in total assistance. Of those that were awarded NEA ARP funding, 18% were new NEA applicants; 27% percent are new NEA grantees; 28% had annual budgets less than \$250,000; 42% were in high-poverty areas; and 70% had not received any other type of federal grant in the last ten years.
- In 2024, the NEA partnered with the White House Domestic Policy Council to co-host “Healing, Bridging, Thriving: A Summit on Arts and Culture in our Communities” a first-of-its-kind national convening which brought together leaders from across sectors, including government officials, policymakers, artists, arts advocates, academics, philanthropic, labor, and community leaders, and the public. This leadership and whole of government convening began an effort to use the arts and humanities to improve efforts to address a wide range of issues confronting society.

Provides A High Return On Investment

- The NEA’s FY 2024 budget is \$207 million and the Administration has proposed an FY25 budget of \$210.1 million. 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 1:1. This generated more than \$500 million in matching support and illustrates why federal support for the arts is uniquely valuable.
- The Bureau of Economic Analysis and the NEA together calculate the arts and culture sector’s contributions to the gross domestic product. In 2022, arts and culture added over **\$1.1 trillion, or 4.3 percent**, to national GDP. Analysis shows that the total economic value added by arts and cultural industries grew by 4.8 percent from 2021-2022. Performing arts organizations saw a steep decline in value added between 2020 and 2021. Between 2021 and 2022, however, the industry made a sharp comeback (an increase of 76.5 percent). Despite this rise, the value added by performing arts organizations is still below the pre-pandemic (2019) level. Arts and cultural employment nationwide increased 6.4 percent in 2022. The total number of arts and cultural jobs for the nation was 5.2 million. Arts and cultural employment increased in 45 states and the District of Columbia. From 2021 through 2022, arts and cultural exports continued to increase; the trade surplus rose from \$15.5 billion to \$21.0 billion—making the arts a powerful export industry.
- 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 arts and culture organizations and an additional \$78.4 billion in event-related expenditures by their audiences. What was the impact of this economic activity? It 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.

Broadens Access and Equity

- The arts sector is a powerful conduit for bridging and healing deep divisions. The NEA can help redress systemic injustice—including long-time inequities in arts funding, as well as supporting a platform for audiences to experience creativity from many cultures.
- The NEA is establishing and cultivating ongoing relationships with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), building capacity for successful applications, and has made recent grants to HBCUs, including Bennett College in Greensboro, NC and Southern University at New Orleans.
- The NEA strives to ensure that all Americans have access to the arts no matter where they live. Among the NEA’s accomplishments is the growth of arts activity in areas of the nation that have been under-resourced, especially in rural and inner-city communities. The Challenge America funding category specifically supports projects that expand access to populations whose opportunities to experience the arts are limited by geography, economics, or disability.

- A significant percentage of grants benefit those who have fewer opportunities to participate in the arts via Challenge America grants and many Grants for Arts Project grants that offer free or reduced-price performances. And, 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 programs that teach traditional arts knowledge to the next generation. NEA grants also make programming available in schools and public community gathering places.

Supports Partnerships

- 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 and university educators.
- 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). Last year, the Creative Forces initiative awarded Creative Forces Community Engagement grants to fund nonclinical art programs for active military members, Veterans, and family/caregivers. Grants totaling more than \$760,000 were awarded to 34 US organizations, including Museum of Glass in Tacoma, WA, Cohesion Dance Project in Helena, MT, and West Nebraska Arts Center in rural Scottsbluff, NE.

Issue brief prepared by the Cultural Advocacy Group, a collaboration of arts and culture stakeholders working collectively to advance federal policy. Updated 2024.