

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS (NEA)

PROMOTING CREATIVITY AND PUBLIC ACCESS TO THE ARTS

ACTION NEEDED

We urge Congress to support a budget of \$200 million for the NEA in the FY 2010 Interior Appropriations bill to restore funding for the creation, preservation, and presentation of the arts in America through the NEA's core programs—*Access to Artistic Excellence*, *Challenge America: Reaching Every Community*, *Federal/State Partnerships*, and *Learning in the Arts*.

NEA Annual Appropriations, FY 1992 to present (in millions of dollars)

Fiscal Year	'92	'93	'94	'95	'96	'97	'98	'99	'00	'01	'02	'03	'04	'05	'06	'07	'08	'09
Appropriation	176.0	174.5	170.2	162.3	99.5	99.5	98.0	98.0	97.6	104.8	115.2	115.7	121.0	121.3	124.4	124.4	144.7	155*

Note: Figures above are not adjusted for inflation. Source: NEA *Pending Congressional approval of Omnibus appropriations bill

TALKING POINTS

The NEA contributes to the development and economic growth of communities nationwide.

- NEA grants to organizations and local arts agencies help them maximize their economic and social contributions to their communities.
- The nonprofit arts industry generates \$166.2 billion annually in economic activity, supports 5.7 million full-time equivalent jobs, and returns \$12.6 billion to the federal government in income taxes. Measured against direct federal cultural spending of about \$1.4 billion, that's a return of nearly nine to one. (Figures from Americans for the Arts, *Arts & Economic Prosperity III* study).
- Nationally, there are 686,076 businesses in the U.S. involved in the creation or distribution of the arts. These businesses employ 2.8 million people, representing 4.20 percent of all businesses and 2.04 percent of all employees, respectively. (Figures from Americans for the Arts, *Creative Industries 2009*)
- The arts attract new tourism dollars. Sixty-five percent of U.S. travelers include cultural events on their trips, spending an average of \$38.05 per event in addition to the cost of admission on event-related items such as meals, parking, and retail sales.
- America's arts and entertainment are leading exports, with estimates of more than \$30 billion annually in overseas sales. Public spending on the arts helps position the United States to compete globally.
- From the work of nonprofit arts agencies to the impact of cultural tourism, the creative sector is important to state economies all across the country. The creative industry in Arkansas, for example, employs nearly 27,000 individuals and generates \$927 million in personal income for Arkansas citizens. Creative enterprises are the state's third largest employer—after transport and logistics and perishable and processed foods. In North Carolina, the wages and income of workers employed by creative industries infused \$3.9 billion into the state's economy in 2006. And in Massachusetts, the 17.6 percent yearly growth of the cultural sector contributed \$4.23 billion to the state's economy (National Governors Association, *Arts & the Economy, Using Arts and Culture to Stimulate State Economic Development*, 2009).

The NEA supports lifelong learning in the arts, through grants, partnerships, research, and national initiatives.

- Students with an education rich in the arts have better grade point averages in core academic subjects, score better on standardized tests, and have lower drop-out rates than students without arts education (*Critical Evidence*, www.aep-arts.org/files/publications/Critical%20Evidence.pdf, published by the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies in collaboration with the Arts Education Partnership).
- NEA grants support a wide range of projects, including educational programs for adults, collaborations between state arts agencies and state education agencies, and K–12 partnerships between arts institutions and educators.
- The NEA funds school-based and community-based grant programs that help children and youth acquire knowledge and understanding of and skills in the arts. Projects must provide participatory learning and engage students with skilled artists, teachers, and excellent art.

The NEA supports artistic excellence and improves access to the arts by granting funds to nonprofit arts organizations.

- In FY 2008, the NEA awarded nearly \$122 million of appropriated funds through more than 2,200 grants reaching all 435 congressional districts.

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- Forty percent of all NEA program funds—approximately \$47.8 million in FY 2008—are re-granted on a formula basis through the state arts agencies, ensuring that federal funding has an even greater reach.
- Through programs like *Challenge America*, the NEA supports artistic activities that reach underserved populations.
- On average, each NEA grant leverages at least seven dollars from other state, local, and private sources, magnifying the impact of the federal investment.
- With more funding, the NEA’s core programs could better bring the best in the arts to all Americans. Inadequate funding has caused a decrease in programs available to the public.

BACKGROUND

The arts infrastructure of the United States is critical to the nation’s cultural well-being as well as its economic vitality. It is supported by a remarkable combination of government, business, foundation, and individual donors. In a striking example of federal/state partnership, the NEA distributes 40 percent of its program dollars to state arts agencies, conditional on each state devoting its own appropriated funds. This partnership ensures that each state has a stable source of arts funding and policy. These grants, combined with state legislative appropriations and other dollars, are distributed widely to strengthen arts infrastructures and ensure broad access to the arts.

The NEA has provided strategic leadership and investment in the arts for more than 40 years. Among its proudest accomplishments is the growth of arts activity in areas of the nation that were previously underserved or not served at all. Americans can now see professional productions and exhibitions of high quality in their own hometowns, and every congressional district now receives direct NEA grants.

Through its core programs—*Access to Artistic Excellence*, *Challenge America: Reaching Every Community*, *Federal/State Partnerships*, and *Learning in the Arts*—the NEA funds dance, design, folk & traditional arts, literature, local arts agencies, media arts, multidisciplinary, museums, music, musical theater, opera, presenting, theater, and visual arts. In addition to direct grants, the NEA provides important leadership that advances the arts sector through national initiatives, research, and publications.

The American public favors spending federal tax dollars in support of the arts, and has made its feelings known to Congress. During the 110th Congress, the NEA received an increase of \$20.3 million, due to the leadership of House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee Chair Congressman Norm Dicks (D-WA) and Senate Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Subcommittee Chair Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA). This increase began to lay the foundation for full restoration of NEA funding to its 1992 level. The Congressional Arts Caucus, led by co-chair Rep. Louise Slaughter (D-NY), helped to defeat three floor amendments to decrease NEA appropriations. Further, in 2007, a bipartisan group of 101 Representatives signed a “Dear Colleague” letter advocating a funding increase.

With the NEA receiving partial restoration in FY 2008, and a \$10 million increase (pending final Congressional approval) in FY 2009, the arts community seeks a total appropriation of \$200 million for FY 2010, which would not only restore the agency to its 1992 level, and but also help maintain a healthy nonprofit arts sector that can contribute fully to communities nationwide. Current funding amounts to just 51 cents per capita, as compared to 69 cents per capita in FY 1992. If the NEA had maintained its 1992 appropriation of \$176 million, that would amount to only 58 cents per capita today.

It is the mission of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) to foster the excellence, diversity, and vitality of the arts in the United States and to broaden public access to the arts. The NEA must provide support for building the capacity of American arts organizations and artists to create and share their work, by initiating national programs, partnering effectively with state and local arts agencies, and helping to ensure lifelong learning in the arts for every American.