NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

SUPPORTING THE ARTS SINCE 1965

WHAT IS THE NEA?

The National Endowment for the Arts is the federal agency that supports and funds the arts to give all Americans the opportunity to experience creativity and participate in the arts.

- **NEA support is project-based and is awarded to thousands of nonprofit organizations across the nation each year.**
- **From visual arts to digital arts, opera to jazz, film to literature, theater to dance to folk and traditional arts, healing arts to arts education, the NEA supports a broad range of America's artistic expression.**
- **The NEA advances arts education across the country by funding initiatives, publishing research, and maintaining partnerships that lay the foundation for lifelong learning.**
- **The NEA is the federal agency of record for arts-related research, providing resources that enable people to better understand how the arts are part of their everyday lives.**

Since its creation by Congress in 1965, the NEA has awarded more than **145,000 grants** totaling approximately **$5 billion**. Every dollar invested directly by the NEA is matched by **$7-10 of additional investment**. The NEA is the only arts funder in America—public or private—that supports the arts in all **50 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories**.

A performance at the Children's Education Village, part of Atlanta's National Black Arts Festival, which got its start with NEA funding. Photo by Brian L. Christian Photography

Cover image: The National Symphony Orchestra performs in front of the U.S. Capitol for A Capitol Fourth, an annual concert series celebrating the nation's Independence Day that is broadcast on PBS and supported by the NEA. Photo courtesy of Capital Concerts

Some of the publications produced by the NEA to provide arts-based research and share stories about the arts in U.S. communities.

HOW DOES THE NEA WORK?

The NEA grant review process is rigorous:

- Peer-review by citizen experts and laypersons from around the country
- Review by the National Council on the Arts, NEA's advisory body
- Final review and award decisions by the NEA chairman

The NEA promotes the arts in the United States by

- Commissioning and disseminating arts-based research
- Offering free resources, including hundreds of podcasts with artists such as Julia Alvarez, Pete Seeger, Robert Battle, Anna Deveare Smith, and Tony Kushner
- Producing the quarterly magazine *NEA Arts* featuring stories on artists and arts organizations from across the country, discussions on trending arts issues, as well as online audio and video features
- Sharing stories about the arts in U.S. communities on our *Art Works Blog* and through social media channels like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram
- Collecting stories from across the nation for our "Tell Us Your Story" project—these stories demonstrate that we are all connected through the arts and that the arts matter and impact us in ways we might not realize

WHO DOES THE NEA SUPPORT?

COMMUNITIES

- Since the program's inception in 2011, the NEA has awarded 325 **Our Town grants** totaling more than $25 million to advance arts-based community development in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico with many projects taking place in communities of less than 100,000 people.
- **The Big Read** is an innovative community reading initiative designed to broaden our understanding of our world, our communities, and ourselves through the joy of sharing a good book.

ARTISTS AND ARTS ORGANIZATIONS

- Each year, the NEA awards thousands of grants. In 2014, the NEA awarded approximately **2,300 grants totaling $118 million** to support projects in almost every art form, including 57 **NEA Literature Fellowships** for creative writers and translators, impacting almost 16,000 communities in every state.
- **NEA Lifetime Honors** recognize artists who have made major contributions to the excellence, vitality, and public appreciation of folk and traditional arts and to jazz—an art form uniquely rooted in American history and culture.

Muralist Dave Loewenstein (wearing hat) with some of the more than 250 community members who created the 150-foot-long mural *The World Comes to Whittier*, supported by the NEA Our Town grant to the Sioux Falls Art Council in South Dakota. Photo by Nicholas Ward, courtesy of Sioux Falls Art Council

Students at T.S. Cooper Elementary in Gates County, North Carolina, learn math concepts by creating original artwork in the style of the artist Henri Matisse as part of the A+ Schools Program supported by the NEA. Photo by Michelle Mazan Burrows

ARTS EDUCATION

- In 2014, **Poetry Out Loud** helped 365,000 students from more than 2,300 schools gain stronger public speaking skills, build self-confidence, and learn about their literary heritage.
- The NEA created the **Shakespeare in American Communities** initiative to bring live theater to middle- and high-school students, reaching nearly 8,000 schools in every state since the program began in 2003.
- The NEA funded nearly **$10 million** in arts education projects in 2014, and supports arts education leaders and networks, such as the Arts Education Partnership and the State Education Agency Directors of Arts Education.

MILITARY

- The **NEA/Military Healing Arts Partnership** uses creative arts therapy and arts engagement programs to improve health and well-being in military healthcare settings.
- **Blue Star Museums** is a collaboration among the NEA, the Department of Defense, Blue Star Families, and more than 2,000 museums in all 50 states that offers free admission to active-duty military personnel and their families during the summer.

PARTNERING FOR SUCCESS

- NEA partnerships bring the arts to the table in new and innovative ways to advance work in areas from healthcare to community development.
- The NEA partners with 23 federal agencies or departments including the National Science Foundation, the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development.
- The NEA has a formal role with the White House Domestic Policy Council and with the White House's Strong Cities, Strong Communities Initiative.
- Forty percent of the NEA's grantmaking funds support the work of state and regional arts organizations.
- The NEA partners with cultural agencies on programs like Turnaround Arts, which uses the arts to increase student achievement in low-performing schools.

Patients in the Healing Arts Program at the National Intrepid Center of Excellence at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center create artwork that express the many layers of their experiences, thoughts, and emotions. Photo courtesy of the NICoE Healing Arts Program

Paul McCartney (left) with Sun Records artists D.J. Fontana and Scotty Moore in the *American Masters* episode on Sun Records. *American Masters* has been produced by WETA/Thirteen since 1986, when it was launched with support from the NEA. Photo by Dan Griffin

ARTS ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTED BY THE NEA

These are some of the important arts organizations in the United States that received crucial NEA funding at pivotal moments in their histories.

- American Ballet Theatre
- American Film Institute
- Appalshop
- Deaf West Theatre
- Jazz at Lincoln Center
- National Black Arts Festival
- National Council for the Traditional Arts
- Spoleto Festival USA
- Steppenwolf Theatre Company
- Sundance Institute
- Walker Art Center
- WNET/Thirteen

#arts4US

THE VALUE OF THE ARTS IN OUR COMMUNITIES

$698 billion — What arts and culture contributed to the United States economy in 2012, or 4.32 percent of the U.S. Gross Domestic Product

Total dollar amount of NEA grants awarded since it was founded by Congress in 1965 — **$5 billion**

4.7 million — Number of workers in the arts and culture sector in the United States, receiving $334.9 billion in compensation

Rate at which students with high arts engagement earned a bachelor's degree compared to those with low arts engagement — **3x more likely**

2:1 — Rate at which arts participants volunteer compared to non-participants

Percentage of NEA grants that take place in high-poverty neighborhoods — **42%**

Number of students who participated in the 2015 Poetry Out Loud National Poetry Recitation Contest from 9,500 high schools — **3 million**

700,000 — Number of active-duty military service members and their families that participated in Blue Star Museums in 2014

Rate at which Nobel Laureates in the sciences are actively engaged with the arts compared to non-Nobel Laureate scientists — **17:1**

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