

**NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT** for the **ARTS**

 arts.gov

Annual Performance Plan
FY 2025

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Introduction

“The arts... belong to all the people of the United States.”

- National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act of 1965

As the premier arts agency of the U.S. government, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) has positioned itself as a vital and sustaining force in American culture, committed to serving all people throughout the nation by bringing the arts into their lives, schools, and neighborhoods. Another enduring role of the agency is to cultivate and elevate existing artistic and cultural traditions as critical assets within communities. Over the past 50+ years, the NEA has become the largest funder of the arts and arts education nationwide and, as a catalyst of public and private support for the arts, an essential institution. Established by Congress in 1965, the NEA annually awards an average of approximately 2,900 grants and cooperative agreements exceeding \$160 million, funding the arts in all 50 states and six U.S. jurisdictions, including rural and urban areas. The NEA also exercises leadership by supporting key initiatives, research and evaluation, and domestic and international partnerships. An organizational chart detailing the structure of the agency is presented following this section.

The arts’ tangible and intangible rewards extend to various realms of our lives. Among the more measurable benefits that the arts confer to society are job creation and economic growth. As of 2021, for example, arts and cultural production added 4.4 percent directly to the nation’s GDP, for a total just over \$1.0 trillion dollars. In the same year, the sector employed 4.9 million wage-and-salary workers whose total compensation was \$504.2 billion.¹ NEA funding to organizations that provide the arts and arts education throughout the U.S. serves this greater economic good, catalyzing further investments in jobs and economic activity that can improve lives and livelihoods for Americans everywhere.

Most recently, in recognition of the NEA’s capacity to promote job growth and financial well-being across the sector—outcomes that translate to whole communities and to the nation itself—Congress appropriated additional funds to the NEA under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. This historic legislation is intended to fuel U.S. recovery from the devastating economic and health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The NEA’s grantees are vital partners in extending these and other benefits. Eligible applicants to the NEA include nonprofit organizations; units of state and local government; federally recognized tribal communities or tribes. The agency also awards honorifics in jazz and folk/traditional arts, and fellowships to creative writers and literary translators. The NEA makes dollar-for-dollar cost-share/matching grants to support exemplary projects in the following areas:

¹ <https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/National-Brief-final-3-16-23.pdf> (Accessed Jan 12, 2024.)

Artist Communities	Literary Arts	Presenting &
Arts Education	Local Arts Agencies	Multidisciplinary Works
Creative Placemaking	Media Arts	Research
Dance	Museums	State & Regional Arts
Design	Music	Organizations
Folk & Traditional Arts	Musical Theater	Theater
International	Opera	Visual Arts

All grant applications to the Arts Endowment are reviewed on the basis of artistic excellence and merit. Applications generally receive three levels of review. First, they are evaluated by advisory panels composed of a diverse group of disciplinary experts and other individuals, including at least one knowledgeable layperson. Panels make recommendations that are forwarded to the National Council on the Arts.

The National Council on the Arts, the agency's standing advisory body, is comprised of nationally and internationally renowned artists, distinguished scholars, and arts patrons appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate. The Council also includes non-voting Members of Congress who are appointed by Senate and House leadership from both sides of the aisle. The Council reviews and votes to approve or reject the applications. Its recommendations for funding are sent to the NEA Chair, who reviews those applications and makes the final decision on all grant awards.

Forty percent of the NEA's grantmaking dollars are awarded to the nation's 56 state and jurisdictional arts agencies (SAAs) and six regional arts organizations (RAOs). These funds are administered through Partnership Agreements with the SAAs and RAOs—an investment that catalyzes arts projects in thousands of communities across the country. Partnership Agreements allow the NEA to build and sustain local capacity for planning, programming, evaluation, and communications. Through these agreements, moreover, the NEA supports creation and implementation of statewide and regionwide plans for strengthening arts education and fostering the arts in underserved communities. Each plan responds to the unique needs of the state or region and its constituents, whose views are solicited by each SAA/RAO through surveys, town hall meetings, arts practitioner convenings, policymaker consultations, and other forms of citizen engagement. These partners are critical to the NEA's ability to fulfill its mission.

Mission: *The arts strengthen and promote the well-being and resilience of people and communities. By advancing equitable opportunities for arts participation and practice, the National Endowment for the Arts fosters and sustains an environment in which the arts benefit everyone in the United States.*

Arts participation means taking part in any number of activities that include the visual and performing arts, crafts and media arts, design, and literary arts and arts education. People engage with the arts as audience members, as viewers or listeners, as readers or learners, and as creators, curators, or performers. These diverse modes of arts participation—and different forms and genres of artistic expression—quicken and

enlarge our sensibilities. The arts broaden and enhance our understanding and our connections to one another and to the greater world. As with individuals, communities and society at large benefit from the arts and arts education— culturally, civically, and economically. The arts heal and unite: they nurture a sense of shared identity, while also permitting distinctive and often marginalized voices to be heard. It is the responsibility of the NEA to elevate artistic achievements throughout the country and to offer people from all backgrounds the opportunity to partake of this living cultural heritage. By performing these functions, the NEA will help to expand the number of arts participants nationwide and to extend the social, educational, health, and economic benefits of the arts to communities of every type.

Vision Statement: *A nation in which the arts are essential to our democracy and to reaching our highest potential by nourishing creative enterprise, freedom of thought, imagination, and inquiry.*

By giving voice to unique talents and perspectives through creative expression, the arts embody and reflect the boldness of our democratic experiment. In remarks he gave at Amherst College on October 26, 1963, President John F. Kennedy described how in the case of the poet Robert Frost, who had died earlier that year, “the artist’s fidelity has strengthened the fiber of our national life.” The President went on to champion the truth-telling powers of artists and the vision of “an America that commands respect not only for its strength but for its civilization as well.”

President Kennedy added: “If sometimes our great artists have been the most critical of our society, it is because their sensitivity and their concern for justice, which must motivate any true artists, make them aware that our nation falls short of its highest potential.” A nation that respects and celebrates the arts is unafraid of inquiring into its mores and behaviors, and re-imagining a more just future. The arts are vital, therefore, to our democratic process, just as they embolden creativity, innovation, and all free thinking.

The agency’s goals, and the objectives and strategies to achieve them, including cross-agency collaborations, are detailed in The National Endowment for the Arts Strategic Plan, Fiscal Years 2022-2026, which was issued in February 2022 and is available [online](#). The FY 2025 Annual Performance Plan (APP) is based on the 2022-2026 Strategic Plan and describes the performance goals and indicators necessary to assess the agency’s progress in accomplishing its strategic objectives. The plan also describes research and evaluation activities that supported the development of the annual performance plan and strategic plan, and information on data validation and verification.

National Endowment for the Arts Office of the Chair

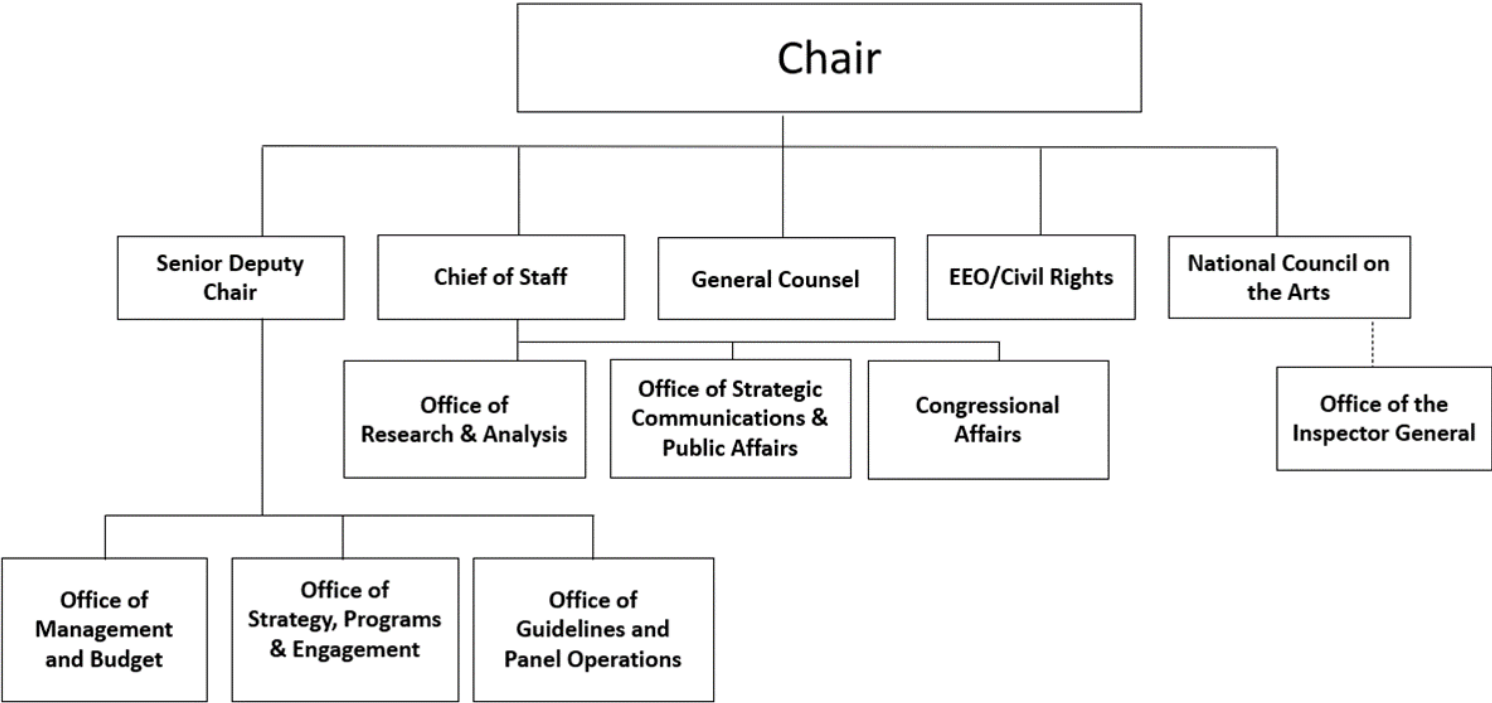


Fig. 1. National Endowment for the Arts Organizational Structure

Data Sources, Validation & Verification

This section provides more detail on data sources used for performance reporting and associated validation and verification methods.

Data Sources

Data sources for performance reporting include both external data collections and internal administrative data. These data are tracked and maintained in separate systems, including spreadsheets. Following review by the providing office, data are collected, reviewed, integrated, and maintained by the Arts Endowment's Office of Research & Analysis (ORA). The sources of data (and corresponding acronyms) used most frequently in this document are as follows:

FDR – Final Descriptive Report. At the completion of each grant, each grantee submits a Final Descriptive Report to the agency, which includes data pertaining to many of the agency's strategic objectives. FDR data are reported as filed by grantees and have not been subject to independent verification.

eGMS – Grants Management System. This is the agency's internal Grants Management System, which tracks basic administrative data on the agency's grant-making activities, including counts of applications received and grants awarded. In FY 2018, the agency transitioned its grant records from an older GMS system to an online platform developed in collaboration with the National Endowment for the Humanities.

SPPA – Survey of Public Participation in the Arts. The SPPA is a comprehensive and detailed survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau every five years (as part of that agency's household surveys) and provides insight into the nature and extent of Americans' participation in the arts. The most recent survey took place in 2022.

ABS – Arts Basic Survey. The ABS, previously known as the Annual Arts Basic Survey, is also conducted by the Census Bureau as a supplement to their Current Population Survey and features selected summary questions drawn from the SPPA. Although less detailed than the larger survey, the ABS has provided estimates of Americans' participation in the arts during years in which the SPPA is not administered.

Throughout this plan, data will be reported through FY 2025 unless otherwise noted. A significant exception is FDR data. The most recent data available from direct grantees' FDRs are from FY 2022, due to a lag occurring from the time of the agency's award of a grant to the conclusion of the grant and extending to the grantee's submission of the FDR. For example, if a grant award is made in FY 2022 and the performance period is

one year, then the FDR from that grant may not have been submitted for up to 120 days into FY 2023. Accounting for this delay, FDR data are reported here by the fiscal year in which the respective grants were awarded, not by the date of FDR receipt. With reference to the example above, the FDR data are captured in FY 2022 because that is the year in which the grant was awarded.

Similarly, this document also refers to FDR data from State Arts Agencies (SAA) and Regional Arts Organizations (RAO) about their subawardees. The NEA relies on state and regional partners to subgrant award funds through the [Partnership Agreements](#) program. For FY 2025, the most recent data available from SAAs and RAOs is from FY 2023, due to a lag occurring from the time of the agency's initial award of the Partnership Agreement to the conclusion of the Partnership Agreement and extending to the subawardee's submission of reports, similar to the delay of direct grantee FDRs. For example, if a Partnership Agreement award is made in FY 2023 and the subaward is granted in the SAA's FY 2024, then the FDR including data from that subaward may not have been submitted for up to 120 days into FY 2024. Further, state and regional partners are eligible for reporting extensions which can further delay receipt of FDRs. Accounting for these delays, FDR data are reported here by the fiscal year in which the respective Partnership Agreements were awarded, not by the date of FDR receipt.

Further, the state and regional institutions report only subawards funded through their Partnership Agreement. The institutions have the option to use funding for subaward programs, but are not required to. Amongst the states and regions, there are large differences between the ratio of NEA funding allocated to grantmaking programs. While some states may fund a large portion of subawards through NEA funds, other states may use funding for other programming and fund grantmaking through private or state funds. For this reason, data reported in the FDRs may not show a complete picture of state and regional grantmaking. This contributes to differences seen between indicators for direct NEA grantees and state and regional subawardees throughout the report.

Data Validation and Verification

The Arts Endowment ensures the accuracy and reliability of the performance data in its APR in accordance with the five data quality specifications in the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 for:

- **Means used to verify and validate measured values:** All performance data reported in the APR are subject to internal data verification and validation by the agency's ORA. A key component of data validation is agency staff consultation. Agency staff are consulted during indicator development to assess whether data collected and measures are a true reflection of the performance being measured and have a clear relationship to the mission and strategic objectives of the agency. Data verification procedures are in place to assess data accuracy, completeness, consistency, and availability. The Arts Endowment creates an

internal guidance document for performance measure reporting, including in a detailed matrix its indicators, data sources, analytical methods (including formulas), and, when appropriate, verification procedures specific to individual indicators. Prior to indicator analysis and reporting, ORA reviews datasets for completeness; missing data are identified and reported in the APR. Methods for handling anomalous data are established and used. In some cases, data are re-checked against source information (e.g., FDR). Confirmatory analyses are then undertaken.

- **Level of accuracy required for the intended use of data:** Performance data reported in the APR are used for management purposes, as a representative indicator of progress in relation to an established target or goal. Accuracy of data is verified to the extent considered necessary, to provide a reasonable representation of progress made relative to a target or goal, enabling the Arts Endowment senior management to determine if progress is adequate.
- **Limitations to the data at the required level of accuracy:** Arts Endowment performance data are subject to potential errors from: the use of estimations and extrapolations, especially where direct measurement is impractical and/or considered too costly; incomplete data; or incorrect coding of grant awards to strategic objectives. The most significant limitation related to grant report data is the self-reported nature of data. As noted above, grant data are reported as submitted by grantees and are not independently verified. Grantee report data from FY 2020 and later are collected via webform. In early iterations of the webform software, grantees were able to submit more than one webform. In the case that a grantee submitted more than one form, the form data submitted last chronologically was utilized for analysis under the assumption that the final submission was the final version of the grantee's report data. Historically, approximately 5% of final reports submitted via webform required use of the chronological assumption. See the discussion of the Management Priority later in this report for more information on efforts to improve the quality of grants data reporting.
- **How the agency has compensated for such limitations if needed to reach the required level of accuracy:** The measurement procedures for each performance measure used in the APR will be described in accompanying documentation. Submitted data are reviewed according to the scope and nature of the activity and in the context of other information to gauge accuracy. Following review and verification by the submitting office, the data are reviewed within their corresponding trends and programmatic contexts by the ORA to determine if further review is needed to adjust or correct the reported data before publication. Senior management and leadership consider this level of accuracy sufficient for their use of the data. Prior experience with using the data, and with assessing historical trends and programmatic contexts, suggest that any limitations are minor and that compensating measures are unnecessary.

Underserved Communities

The FY 2025 APP periodically refers to “underserved communities.” Broadly, the NEA defines this term and “equity” based on the January 20, 2021 White House *Executive Order on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government*:

1. The term “equity” means the consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment, such as Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality.
2. The term “underserved communities” refers to populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life, as exemplified by the list in the preceding definition of “equity.”

The agency operationalizes this definition differently across programs and projects. In grantmaking programs such as Challenge America, the term “underserved groups/communities” is defined by federal and agency legislation and policy as: “those whose opportunities to experience the arts are limited relative to: *geography, ethnicity, economics, or disability.*”

For the purpose of analysis and reporting, the agency defines “underserved communities” based on observable and available data points. In this report, the NEA defines an “underserved community” as a population in a location meeting at least one of the following three criteria:

- High Poverty Area: A census tract with 20% or more of the population below the poverty line.²
- Rural Area: A census tract outside of metropolitan statistical area.³

² High Poverty Areas are identified based on income and poverty data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s [American Community Survey](#).

³ Rural Areas are determined using the most recent (but not later than the fiscal year reported) metro delineation file from the [Census Bureau](#). Census tracts within metropolitan statistical areas are considered urban. All other census tracts are considered rural.

- Predominantly Non-White Area: A Census tract with over 50% of the population reporting a race and/or ethnicity other than white.⁴

The determination of underserved communities relates directly to the agency’s work on equity. The NEA is committed to supporting equitable opportunities for arts participation and practice for all Americans in the United States. This commitment is reflected in the NEA’s [Equity Action Plan](#), published in 2022.

Table 2 provides an overview of performance indicators referencing underserved communities and the related operationalized definitions.

⁴ Predominant Race is based on race and ethnicity data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s [American Community Survey](#).

TABLE 2: Definitions of Underserved Communities in Performance Indicators

#	Indicator	Definition
1.2.1.1	Number of organizations located in underserved communities and that are engaged through technical assistance (e.g., webinars or other events/services) provided by the NEA. <i>Source: Administrative data</i>	A population located in one of the following areas: high poverty area, rural area, or a predominantly non-white area.
1.2.1.2	Percent of applications received and adjudicated by the NEA from organizations located in underserved communities . <i>Source: eGMS</i>	A population located in one of the following areas: high poverty area, rural area, or a predominantly non-white area.
1.2.1.3	Success rate of applications received and adjudicated by the NEA from organizations located in underserved communities . <i>Source: eGMS</i>	A population located in one of the following areas: high poverty area, rural area, or a predominantly non-white area.
1.2.2.1 ⁵	Percent of applications received and adjudicated by the NEA from organizations primarily addressing underserved communities . <i>Source: eGMS, GAF</i>	Populations whose opportunities to experience the arts are limited relative to: geography, ethnicity, economics, or disability.
1.2.2.2	Success rate of applications received and adjudicated by the NEA from organizations primarily addressing underserved communities . <i>Source: eGMS</i>	Populations whose opportunities to experience the arts are limited relative to: geography, ethnicity, economics, or disability.
1.3.1.1	Percent of arts education projects located in underserved communities and that directly engaged youth. <i>Source: FDR</i>	A population located in one of the following areas: high poverty area, rural area, or a predominantly non-white area.
1.3.1.2	Percent of arts education projects supported by subawards through NEA Partnership Agreements, that were located in underserved communities , and that directly engaged youth. <i>Source: SAA/RAO FDR</i>	A population located in one of the following areas: high poverty area, rural area, or a predominantly non-white area.
CCO 1.1.1	Percent of NEA awards supporting projects that engaged diverse demographic groups . <i>Source: FDR</i>	A population located in a high poverty or predominantly non-white area.
CCO 1.1.2	Percent of subawards, through Partnership Agreements, supporting project activities that engaged diverse demographic groups . <i>Source: SAA/RAO FDR</i>	A population located in a high poverty or predominantly non-white area.
CCO 1.1.3	Percent of NEA awards that supported project activities in rural areas or high-poverty neighborhoods . <i>Source: FDR</i>	A population located in a rural or high poverty area.
CCO 1.1.4	Percent of subawards that supported project activities in rural areas or high-poverty neighborhoods . <i>Source: SAA/RAO FDR</i>	A population located in a rural or high poverty area.

⁵ Though not available for FY 2023, data for Indicator 1.2.2.1 and 1.2.2.2 will be reported by applicants in the Grant Application Form. While a definition is not supplied in the form, applicants select factors that limit the population’s opportunity to benefit from arts programming. Factors include: geography, economic status, race or ethnicity, disability, other factors (with specification), or no specific underserved/distinct group.

Differences in Strategic Goals

The FY 2025 APR reports on the progress of the National Endowment for the Arts' FY 2022-2026 Strategic Plan, which was issued in February 2022. Most measures included in this APP will report five years of data, from FY 2021-2025. Application data from FY 2021 were collected under the National Endowment for the Arts' previous Strategic Plan, for FYs 2018-2022. Therefore, these applications were assigned outcome codes that aligned with the agency's previous Strategic Plan.

Many of the strategic goals and outcomes between the two plans are similar, allowing for comparisons across fiscal years. However, there are slight differences between outcomes, as outlined in Table 3. For example, indicator 2.1.1.1 references the NEA-supported activities focused on advancing the health and well-being of individuals through the arts, aligning with the current agency strategic objective 2.1: Support arts projects with a focus on advancing the health and well-being of individuals. Any applications from FY 2022-2023 meeting this objective were assigned an "L1: Arts and Health" outcome code. Similarly, the previous plan included the strategic objective 2.4: Support access to creative arts therapies and evidence-based programs in the arts and health. Any applications from FY 2019-2021 meeting this objective were assigned an "F4: Arts & Health" outcome code. While we can compare "Arts & Health" applications across strategic plan periods, they are not representative of the same objectives and may not represent all applications received that would meet the current strategic objective.

TABLE 3: Differences in Strategic Objectives Codes

2022-2026 Objective	Outcome	2019-2022 Objective	Outcome
Objective 1.1: Expand public access to the NEA’s programs and award-supported activities.	K1: Engagement	Objective 2.1: Provide opportunities for the American people to engage with the arts.	F1: Engagement
Objective 1.3: Provide opportunities for people throughout the country to participate in arts education and to increase their knowledge and skills in the arts at all stages of life.	K2: Learning	Objective 2.2: Provide opportunities for the American people to acquire knowledge and skills in the arts at all stages of life.	F2: Learning
Objective 1.4: Ensure opportunities for the international exchange of artists and arts and cultural traditions.	K3: International Activities	<i>No Corresponding Objective</i>	<i>No Corresponding Objective</i>
Objective 2.1: Support arts projects with a focus on advancing the health and well-being of individuals.	L1: Arts & Health	Objective 2.4: Support access to creative arts therapies and evidence-based programs in the arts and health.	F4: Arts & Health
Objective 2.2: Embed the arts in system-wide initiatives that strengthen or heal communities.	L2: Strengthening Communities	Objective 2.3: Provide opportunities for the arts to be integrated into the fabric of community life.	F3: Strengthening Communities
Objective 3.1: Support the development of skills and strategies that will enable arts leaders to manage more effective organizations and agencies.	M1: Capacity-Building	<i>No Corresponding Objective</i>	<i>No Corresponding Objective</i>

TABLE 3 (continued): Differences in Strategic Objectives Codes

2022-2026 Objective	Outcome	2019-2022 Objective	Outcome
Objective 3.2: Produce research, statistics, and general information about the arts for the benefit of the arts sector and beyond.	M2: Research	Objective 3.2: Expand and promote evidence of the value and impact of the arts for the benefit of the American people.	G1: Research / Understanding
Objective 3.3: Invest in the capacity of arts organizations to support tech-centered creative practices and to serve a broader public through digital or emergent technology.	M3: Technology	<i>No Corresponding Objective</i>	<i>No Corresponding Objective</i>

Performance Framework

The Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Annual Performance Plan (APP) supports the NEA Strategic Plan: FY 2022-2026, which is posted on the NEA website. The Strategic Plan outlines the agency's strategic goals and objectives and the means and strategies to accomplish them. The APP sets out performance goals and indicators in support of the strategic objectives.

The NEA APP has three major components: (1) strategic goals and objectives; (2) performance goals; and (3) performance and other indicators.

The **strategic goals and objectives**, which are outlined in the Strategic Plan, are the starting point for the FY 2025 APP. This nexus between the Strategic Plan and the APP helps to ensure that the performance goals are integrated with the agency's mission. Goal leaders are identified for each strategic objective.

The **performance goals** in the APP link directly to each strategic objective in the NEA Strategic Plan. The NEA selected these performance goals because they are intermediate outcomes or outputs necessary to achieve the strategic objectives.

The **performance and other indicators** are measures the NEA intends to assess during FY 2025. In many cases, these indicators track incremental progress toward achieving the performance goals.

Targets are identified for performance indicators only. Targets have been adjusted for several indicators, since baseline data was collected and reported in the FY 2023 APR. In some cases, baseline data was not available; this is indicated in this APP by stating "baseline data not available" in the target cell. "Other" indicators are not assigned targets; "target not required" appears in the target cell for these indicators. Documentation on data validation and verification is presented later in this plan.

During the term of the FY 2022-2026 Strategic Plan, the NEA may adjust or add performance goals and/or their underlying measures. Currently, for example, the agency is testing the use of data science methods to more efficiently analyze textual data from grantee reports. Also, implementation of the proposed APP is contingent on the agency's ability to maintain funding levels and staffing for this work.

Strategic Goal 1. Support opportunities for all people to participate in the arts and arts education.

The arts celebrate our differences while connecting us through shared experiences. Americans from all backgrounds can experience the arts by attending music, dance, and theater performances, visiting art and design exhibits, reading or listening to works of literature, and enjoying the arts via media and technology. Participation also can involve making art of one's own, whether alone or with other people, and acquiring an arts education—knowledge, skills, and competencies that can last a lifetime. All of these varieties of participation can and do occur anywhere, in formal or informal settings, whether inside or outside a specific cultural tradition.

Although the arts are a universal resource, long prized by nations for transmitting cultural identity and creative expression, there is no guarantee that everyone will have equal access to arts opportunities. In the U.S., socioeconomic and geographic factors play an outsized role in people's ability to participate in the arts.

Federal surveys consistently show that higher education and income levels, as well as urbanicity, are closely correlated with greater rates of arts participation. Most recently, a Survey of Public Participation in the Arts found that one in three U.S. adults could not agree with the following statement: "There are plenty of opportunities for me to take part in arts and cultural activities in my neighborhood or community." Among those most likely not to agree were Blacks and Hispanics/Latinos.⁶

By ensuring greater opportunities for everyone to take part in the arts and arts education, the NEA will extend the benefits of those activities to more Americans. Such benefits are not limited to aesthetic, emotional, or intellectual rewards. They translate to greater social, civic, and economic well-being in the lives of individuals, of whole communities, and of a nation itself.

Strategic Objective 1.1 Expand Public Access to the NEA's Programs and Award-Supported Activities.

Goal Leader/Lead Office

Office of Strategy, Programs and Engagement

People connect with the arts by attending music, dance, and theater performances; by visiting architectural wonders and art exhibits; by reading works of literature; or by picking up a paintbrush or pencil to capture the world around them or to sketch their innermost thoughts. Today, they even carry in their pockets—in the form of smartphones—access to museums, concert halls, stages, and studios that enable individual arts experiences on demand. For artists and audiences alike, new pathways

⁶ https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/US_Patterns_of_Arts_ParticipationRevised.pdf. (Accessed Dec. 9, 2021.)

for participation abound. And yet, access to those in-person and/or digital pathways is by no means guaranteed

The NEA addresses this need by providing opportunities for the public to engage with the arts through its grant programs, including through Partnership Agreement grants to SAAs and RAOs. The agency’s grantmaking is responsive to the changing landscape of arts participation and arts production. The NEA rewards innovative strategies and models for engaging the public directly with arts experiences, for preserving them, and for making them accessible to all. At the same time, the NEA strives to promote funding and partnership opportunities to all eligible entities, whether or not they have experienced prior success in competing for these resources.

Performance Goal 1.1.1 The NEA increases the percentage of grant applications received from first-time applicants.		
Indicators	Indicator Type	FY 25 Target
1. Percent of applications received and adjudicated by the NEA, by first-time applicant status. <i>Source: eGMS</i>	Performance	9%
2. Success rate of applications received and adjudicated by the NEA, by first-time applicant status. <i>Source: eGMS</i>	Other*	Target not required

*The success rate of applications is not considered a performance indicator because factors beyond first-applicant status determine the selection of applications for award. All grant applications to the NEA are reviewed on the basis of artistic excellence and merit. Applications are evaluated by advisory panels composed of a diverse group of disciplinary experts and other individuals, including at least one knowledgeable layperson. Panels make recommendations that are forwarded to the National Council on the Arts.

Performance Goal 1.1.2 The NEA increases the number of communities that host NEA grantee organizations and NEA-supported project activities.		
Indicators	Indicator Type	FY 25 Target
1. Number of unique communities that contain NEA grantee organizations. <i>Source: eGMS</i>	Performance	677
2. Number of unique communities where NEA-supported project activities took place. <i>Source: FDR</i>	Performance	1,608

Performance Goal 1.1.3 The NEA supports projects that expand access to the arts through strategic partnerships.		
Indicators	Indicator Type	FY 25 Target
1. Percent of NEA-supported projects that identify, as strategic partners, organizations outside the arts sector. <i>Source: FDR pre- FY 2024; GAF FY 2024-25</i>	Performance	43%
2. Percent of NEA-supported projects that identify minority-serving institutions of higher education as strategic partners. <i>Source: GAF</i>	Other	Target not required

Strategic Objective 1.2 Prioritize Data-Driven Methods to Broaden and Deepen Engagement with Underserved Communities.

Goal Leader/Lead Office

Office of the Strategy, Programs and Engagement
Office of Research & Analysis

Data and evidence are poised to improve the agency’s administration of grants and programs so that even larger numbers of people—from more diverse backgrounds than before—can benefit from NEA programs and grant activities. Tools like U.S. Census Bureau data files and geospatial mapping will allow the agency to target historically underserved areas more effectively in its engagement efforts.⁷

One example of an NEA program dedicated to this type of engagement is Challenge America, which supports underserved populations through grants to primarily small and mid-sized organizations. Beyond this program, the agency routinely conducts outreach so that its programs and grant-supported activities can benefit people in every Congressional District. Through targeted outreach and award programs, the NEA extends economic opportunities through the arts and creativity to underserved communities and regions across the nation.

In recent years, moreover, the NEA has elevated opportunities for tribal nations, historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs), and other minority-serving institutions of higher education to participate in NEA programs. By consulting empirical data as the agency undertakes these and other initiatives, the NEA will achieve a greater likelihood of success in building and sustaining relationships with people and

⁷ For a definition of “underserved,” see the White House *Executive Order on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government*, Jan. 20, 2021.

organizations that have been underserved by NEA programs.

Performance Goal 1.2.1 The NEA increases engagement with potential applicant organizations in underserved communities.		
Indicators	Indicator Type	FY 25 Target
1. Number of organizations located in underserved communities and that are engaged through technical assistance (e.g., webinars or other events/services) provided by the NEA. <i>Source: Administrative data</i>	Performance	Baseline data not available
2. Percent of applications received and adjudicated by the NEA from organizations located in underserved communities. <i>Source: eGMS</i>	Performance	54%
3. Success rate of applications received and adjudicated by the NEA from organizations located in underserved communities. <i>Source: eGMS</i>	Other*	Target not required

*See earlier footnote regarding success rate.

Performance Goal 1.2.2 The NEA increases engagement with potential applicant organizations that primarily address underserved communities.		
Indicators	Indicator Type	FY 25 Target
1. Percent of applications received and adjudicated by the NEA from organizations primarily addressing underserved communities. <i>Source: eGMS, GAF</i>	Performance	Baseline data not available
2. Success rate of applications received and adjudicated by the NEA from organizations primarily addressing underserved communities. <i>Source: eGMS, GAF</i>	Other*	Target not required

* See earlier footnote regarding success rate.

Strategic Objective 1.3 Provide Opportunities for People throughout the Country to Participate in Arts Education and to Increase Their Knowledge and Skills in the Arts at All Stages of Life.

Goal Leader/Lead Office

Arts Education Division

Folk & Traditional Arts Division

By helping to foster public appreciation and understanding of various art forms, genres, and artistic traditions, the NEA will build public capacity for lifelong participation in the arts. For audiences and learners, the outcome will be vibrant and transformative arts experiences. For artists and teachers, the NEA will facilitate the transfer of critical knowledge and skills that will enable them to refine and improve their work.

The arts are essential to a well-rounded education. Numerous studies have revealed the social and emotional benefits of arts education for early childhood development, and the ability of arts education to bridge gaps in academic achievement among teenagers and youth who come from less privileged backgrounds than others. Additionally, arts education contributes to students' acquisition and development of skills (e.g., the "four Cs"—communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and especially creativity) that have been closely associated with 21st-century job requirements. Further along the lifespan, older adults who engage with the arts have reported higher levels of cognitive ability and fewer limitations to their physical functioning.

The agency's grants support arts learning activities across a variety of artistic disciplines for people of all ages. Grants awarded by the NEA Arts Education division support K-12 students. NEA grants, including from other offices, also support the integration of arts learning with other academic curricula, including STEM disciplines. Beyond grants for student learners, Arts Education grants support professional development opportunities for educators, including but not limited to arts instructors. Additionally, NEA programs such as Poetry Out Loud offer arts learning experiences for high school students (including, in this case, benefits that extend from poetry appreciation to language skills development).

Apprenticeships are time-honored programs allowing master artists to train apprentices, often over an extended period of time. These trainees then have the ability to teach others, sharing what they have learned with their own communities. Formal learning programs of this nature are instrumental in passing on cultural knowledge to the next generation. Through the NEA's continued support of state folklife programs and their apprenticeship awards, the agency ensures that traditional artists have the opportunity to pass on the techniques and cultural knowledge of their

art forms, which can be as diverse as Mexican ballet folklorico, Northern Arapaho beadwork, gospel singing, and taiko drumming. The NEA also supports apprenticeships directly through its own grantmaking. As with the NEA’s support of the arts and arts education more generally, such apprenticeships form a critical link in connecting economic and labor-related outcomes from artistic practice to communities at large.

Performance Goal 1.3.1 The NEA engages underserved youth in arts education through activities supported by its awards and partnerships.		
Indicators	Indicator Type	FY 25 Target
1. Percent of arts education projects located in underserved communities and that directly engaged youth. <i>Source: FDR</i>	Performance	67%
2. Percent of arts education projects supported by subawards through NEA Partnership Agreements, that were located in underserved communities, and that directly engaged youth. <i>Source: SAA/RAO FDR</i>	Other	Target not required

Performance Goal 1.3.2 The NEA supports the arts education sector with convenings, research, and technical assistance.		
Indicators	Indicator Type	FY 25 Target
1. Number of NEA-supported convenings, research products, and technical assistance opportunities made available to the arts education sector. <i>Source: Administrative data</i>	Performance	50

Strategic Objective 1.4 Ensure Opportunities for the International Exchange of Artists and Arts and Cultural Traditions.

Goal Leader/Lead Office

Office of International Activities
Literary Arts Division

According to the founding legislation for the NEA, the United States’ reputation as a world leader must not “rest solely upon superior power, wealth, and technology, but must be solidly founded upon worldwide respect and admiration for the Nation’s high qualities as a leader in the realm of ideas and of the spirit.”

Nowhere are these traits better exemplified than in America’s artistic and cultural contributions. International demand for U.S. artists and their artworks is best captured by a single statistic. . In 2021, the most recent year for which such data are available, the U.S. exported \$17.8 billion more in arts and cultural goods and services than it imported from other countries.Unlike many other segments of the nation’s economy, the arts and culture segment is running a trade surplus.

By working with the State Department and other entities to enable nation-to-nation exchanges of artists and artworks, the NEA assists in providing U.S. artists access to global markets and audiences. Concurrently, international exchanges permit U.S. audiences, artists, and communities to experience vibrant cultural traditions and artists from abroad.

Apart from fostering such exchanges, the NEA communicates regularly with international scholars, policymakers, and arts administrators who seek to learn about U.S. infrastructure for domestic arts programs. All of these activities help to advance the federal government’s efforts at cultural diplomacy. They also nourish the capacity of artists and audiences everywhere to realize their shared humanity through various forms of creativity and cultural expression.

Performance Goal 1.4.1 The NEA supports opportunities for the international exchange of artists and arts and cultural traditions, which yield demonstrable benefits for the artists and the arts.		
Indicators	Indicator Type	FY 25 Target
1. Number of NEA awards that support the international exchange of artists and arts and cultural traditions. <i>Source: eGMS</i>	Performance	35
2. Number of NEA awards that support the translation of specific works of prose, poetry, or drama from other languages into English. <i>Source: eGMS</i>	Other	Target not required

Strategic Goal 2. Integrate the Arts with Strategies that Promote the Well-Being and Resilience of People and Communities.

Over the last few years in particular, the nation has been tested with extreme pressure on its healthcare system, its economy and environment, and its sense of fairness and social justice. Throughout such traumas as COVID-19, racial violence, and natural disasters, the arts have been a force for healing and repair. Through direct grantmaking and strategic partnerships, the NEA will continue to support projects that

integrate arts-based strategies in health, community development, and emergency preparedness and responsiveness. These systems-based approaches to achieve positive outcomes for towns and neighborhoods already have been central to arts-and-public health initiatives, to the arts' deployment in disaster relief, to collective efforts to achieve equitable access in arts education, and to a variety of activities known as creative placemaking—the integration of arts, culture, and design with comprehensive community development. This strategic goal will permit more focused investments in communal spaces—but it also will bring greater visibility to the use of design and arts programs and therapies in improving health and well-being for individuals and communities.

Strategic Objective 2.1 Support Arts Projects with a Focus on Advancing the Health and Well-Being of Individuals.

Goal Leader/Lead Office

Office of the Senior Deputy Chair
Office of Accessibility
Office of Research & Analysis

In partnership with U.S. Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs and state and local arts agencies, the NEA directs Creative Forces®: NEA Military Healing Arts Network. The initiative places creative arts therapies at the core of patient-centered care at clinical sites throughout the country, including telehealth services, and increases access to community arts activities to promote health, wellness, and quality of life for military service members, veterans, and their families and caregivers. Furthermore, in partnership with the Mid-America Arts Alliance, the Creative Forces Community Engagement Grant program aims to improve the health, well-being, and quality of life for military-connected populations by empowering creative expression, building social connections, and improving resilience.

The lessons learned from implementing Creative Forces will inform other strategies to advance individual health and well-being through the arts. The networking, technical assistance, and the evaluation and learning that occur across the Creative Forces program are typical of the field-building activities necessary to realize this strategic objective for broader population groups. At the federal level, the NEA models this knowledge transfer by leading the Interagency Task Force on the Arts and Human Development, which meets quarterly to examine research projects and evidence-based practice at the intersection of the arts, health, and human development.

Indeed, apart from Creative Forces, the NEA regularly supports not only creative arts therapies (e.g., art therapy, music therapy, dance/movement therapy, and drama therapy), but also arts-in-health programs that occur in clinical and non-clinical

settings. Additionally—through direct grants and through partnerships with SAAs and RAOs—the agency funds arts projects that support healthy aging and healthy childhood and youth development, as well as rehabilitation and recovery for people in trauma, or those in prison or juvenile justice settings.

Performance Goal 2.1.1 The NEA supports projects and partnerships that engage individuals in activities with the intent of advancing their health and well-being through the arts.		
Indicators	Indicator Type	FY 25 Target
1. Number of service members served by Creative Forces clinical creative arts therapists. <i>Source: Clinical documentation</i>	Performance	2,500
2. Number of therapeutic encounters facilitated by Creative Forces clinical creative arts therapists. <i>Source: Clinical documentation</i>	Performance	13,000

Performance Goal 2.1.2 Through convenings, research, and technical assistance, the NEA supports practitioners, researchers, and policy-makers at the intersection of the arts and health and well-being.		
Indicators	Indicator Type	FY 25 Target
1. Number of NEA-supported convenings, research products, and technical assistance opportunities made available to practitioners, researchers, and policy-makers seeking to advance individual health and well-being through the arts. <i>Source: Administrative data</i>	Performance	115

Strategic Objective 2.2 Embed the Arts in System-Wide Initiatives that Strengthen or Heal Communities.

Goal Leader/Lead Office

Design & Creative Placemaking Division
 Arts Education Division
 Folk & Traditional Arts Division

Beyond supporting arts projects that advance individual health and well-being, the NEA supports grassroots partnerships that integrate the arts with long-term strategies to heal a whole community, or to protect or revitalize its natural, cultural, and economic resources. On a local level, these strategies often take the shape of creative placemaking programs—such as those supported by the NEA’s Our Town initiative—but they also involve collective impact models that ensure equitable access to arts education within K-12 school systems. Whether such projects contribute to community planning and development, a new national infrastructure for folk and traditional arts, emergency preparedness and recovery, or responses to climate change, they invariably require partnerships that the NEA can help to catalyze and sustain across multiple sectors.

Performance Goal 2.2.1 The NEA supports grassroots partnerships that integrate the arts with long-term strategies to heal a whole community, or to protect or revitalize its natural, cultural, and economic resources.

Indicators	Indicator Type	FY 25 Target
1. Number of unique communities, across the strategic plan period (FY 2022-2026) in which organizations were awarded NEA funds for the purpose of embedding the arts in system-wide initiatives that seek to strengthen or heal communities. <i>Source: eGMS</i>	Performance	79

Performance Goal 2.2.2 Through convenings, research, and technical assistance, the NEA strengthens the integration of the arts in system-wide initiatives.

Indicators	Indicator Type	FY 25 Target
1. Number of NEA-supported convenings, research products, and technical assistance opportunities made available to practitioners, researchers, and policy-makers seeking to integrate the arts with system-wide initiatives to strengthen and heal communities. <i>Source: Administrative data</i>	Performance	95

Strategic Goal 3. Build Capacity and Infrastructure within the Arts Sector through Knowledge-Sharing, Tools, Resources, and Evidence-Based Practices.

Arts organizations, funders, and cultural policymakers frequently look to the NEA for guidance on issues confronting the arts sector, and for research and information that can support their practice. Especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and related economic hardships, the arts sector will require greater leadership, empirical insights, and technological capacity to rebuild better while serving all people and communities nationwide.

For the third consecutive five-year period, the NEA will launch a research agenda seeking to promote research about the value and impact of the arts. In conjunction with these projects, the NEA will support the creation and distribution of evidence-based guides, data tools, and other resources to assist cultural researchers and practitioners.

Leadership development for emerging, mid-career, and late-career arts leaders at

organizations of all sizes will be essential to the arts sector’s sustainability. Through grantmaking and strategic partnerships, the NEA will support these training opportunities in order for arts professionals to better navigate a shifting landscape for nonprofit arts organizations and their beneficiaries.

In response to other recent changes to the U.S. arts landscape, the agency will heighten investments in projects that use digital technology in the creation and/or delivery of art. Greater support for tech-centered artistic practice and for digital capacity-building within arts organizations also can yield positive results for diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. This type of support will help to bridge digital divides within different segments of the arts sector—even as it will allow artists and audiences to contribute to and benefit from technological breakthroughs in arts creation and delivery.

Strategic Objective 3.1 Support the Development of Skills and Strategies That Will Enable Arts Leaders to Manage More Effective Organizations and Agencies.

Goal Leader/Lead Office

Office of Strategy, Programs, and Engagement

In addition to its grantmaking function, the NEA also provides leadership within the broader arts ecosystem—as noted in Strategic Objective 3.2, which emphasizes research and communications in the field. Another form of assistance centers on professional development and training opportunities for arts leaders.

Several factors have contributed to a demand for new and different skills and competencies for arts leaders that may not have been required in the past. These factors include the following needs: to lead arts organizations effectively in a post-COVID-19 environment; to promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in the arts; and to ensure continuity of skills acquisition and learning for successive generations of arts leaders, including those working in policy and practice at the crossroads of the arts and other sectors (e.g., health, community development, the environment). To help fulfill such needs, the NEA will support peer-to-peer learning groups and workshops for arts administrators.

Performance Goal 3.1.1 The NEA supports the development of skills and strategies that will enable arts leaders to manage more effective organizations and agencies.		
Indicators	Indicator Type	FY 25 Target
1. Number of grantees reporting that NEA funding enabled them to build the capacity to manage more effective organizations and agencies. <i>Source: FDR</i>	Performance	Baseline data not available
2. Percent of participants expressing satisfaction with the quality and value of services provided through NEA-supported leadership training and technical assistance initiatives. <i>Source: Training/technical assistance feedback form</i>	Performance	Baseline data not available

Strategic Objective 3.2 Produce Research, Statistics, and General Information About the Arts for the Benefit of the Arts Sector and Beyond.

Goal Leader/Lead Office

Office of Research & Analysis
Office of Public Affairs

In addition to supporting leadership training and skills development within the wider arts sector, the NEA builds capacity for arts organizations through research and evaluation. Evidence-based practice guides, literature reviews, and statistical reports can assist arts organizations in more equitably serving the American public. The NEA also supports studies about the value and impact of the arts to individuals. This category of research can boost public recognition of the arts’ benefits for society—thus validating the work of artists and arts organizations in terms meaningful to funders, policymakers, and cross-sectoral partners.

Beyond using research and evaluation to measure the arts’ impacts, or to promote effective practices in the arts, the NEA communicates regularly with the arts and cultural sector and the general public about a range of topics, themes, programs, and opportunities in the arts. The NEA’s Office of Public Affairs publishes this content on traditional and social media platforms, facilitates interviews between NEA staff and media outlets to further promote the arts, and supports convenings, speeches, and other events featuring the NEA. The NEA’s website carries up-to-date information and resources for audiences and organizations from all backgrounds.

Performance Goal 3.2.1 The NEA promotes the arts and engages with communities in every state, territory, and the District of Columbia through traditional media, social media, and the agency’s website and publications.		
Indicators	Indicator Type	FY 25 Target
1. Percent of states and U.S. jurisdictions, including the District of Columbia, in which NEA-related articles appear in news outlets. <i>Source: Public Affairs records</i>	Performance	100%
2. Percent of states and U.S. jurisdictions whose residents interact with the NEA through the agency’s website. <i>Source: Google Analytics data</i>	Performance	100%

Performance Goal 3.2.2 The NEA advances research in the arts through the social and behavioral sciences to investigate priority topics established in the agency’s five-year research agenda.		
Indicators	Indicator Type	FY 25 Target
1. Percent of NEA website users who express satisfaction with the value of research information and publications available there. <i>Source: Pop-up survey</i>	Performance	Baseline data not available
2. Mean citation rate for projects resulting from NEA awards for research. <i>Source: Bibliometric research</i>	Performance	2.4

Strategic Objective 3.3 Invest in the Capacity of Arts Organizations to Support Tech-Centered Creative Practices and to Serve a Broader Public through Digital or Emergent Technology.

Goal Leader/Lead Office
Media Arts Division

For decades, artists and arts organizations have experimented with the use of digital and emergent technology as a creative medium, creating a dynamic but consistently under-resourced field of artistic practice. A NEA research report, *Tech as Art: Supporting Artists Who Use Technology as a Creative Medium* (2021), analyzes this field and the historic barriers and opportunities that have defined it. The report also highlights the cross-sectoral practices of tech-centered artists, their engagement with the larger societal issues of our time—ranging from racial justice to climate change—and their capacity to network and innovate.

Although data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis suggest that web streaming and web publishing are among the highest-growth categories of all arts-related industries, the work of tech-centered artists is poorly represented across the U.S. arts funding landscape, as shown by the Tech as Art report. And yet, the inclusion of these artists in the work of arts organizations promoting different artistic disciplines has become more critical than ever, now that the COVID-19 pandemic has likely forever altered the shape of arts programming and presentation. As in-person events came to a halt in early 2020, organizations were forced to turn to digital and hybrid programming. Over the next few years, the NEA will invest in greater capacity for arts organizations and artists to

harvest lessons from the pandemic and offer digital opportunities for arts participation—inclusive of hybrid programming—to reach a broader and more diverse public.

Performance Goal 3.3.1 Grantees report that NEA funding enabled them to build the capacity to serve a broader public through digital or emergent technology or support tech-centered creative practices.		
Indicators	Indicator Type	FY 25 Target
1. Number of grantees reporting that NEA funding enabled them to build the capacity to serve a broader public through digital or emergent technology. <i>Source: FDR</i>	Performance	Baseline data not available
2. Number of grantees reporting that NEA funding enabled them to build the capacity to support tech-centered creative practices. <i>Source: FDR</i>	Performance	Baseline data not available

Strategic Goal 4. Pursue and Adopt Exemplary Practices to Support the Agency’s Mission.

The NEA is the sole arts funding entity, public or private, whose funding reaches every Congressional District in all 50 states and U.S. jurisdictions, supporting activities within the arts and culture sector such as arts presentations, artist residencies, arts education and healing arts projects, research, creative placemaking, and technical assistance for organizational capacity building. With such an ambitious mission and extensive roster of programmatic activities, the NEA can succeed only because of its commitment to its employees and organizational excellence. Creating and maintaining a highly functioning organization allows the NEA to fulfill its considerable responsibilities to the American people.

Strategic Objective 4.1 Continue to be Accountable and Transparent to the Public through Effective Operations that Promote Vigilant Stewardship of Funds.

Goal Leader/Lead Office

- Office of Deputy Chair for Management & Budget
- Office of Information Technology Management
- Office of Guidelines & Panel Operations

The NEA’s staff design work systems to be effective, efficient, measurable, and transparent. The agency maintains and continually improves upon policies, processes,

and systems that ensure optimal transparency and accountability. Chief among these is the NEA's grant application review process, at the heart of which are review panels comprised of citizen panels—both experts in the various arts fields, as well as laypersons with knowledge in the relevant fields.

Performance Goal 4.1.1 The NEA is a vigilant steward of funds through accountable, transparent, and effective operations.		
Indicators	Indicator Type	FY 25 Target
1. Annual receipt of an unmodified audit opinion. <i>Source: Administrative records</i>	Performance	Receipt of unmodified audit opinion
2. The data and deliverables submitted to USASpending.gov and other required federal data systems are certified as accurate, complete, and in accordance with government-wide data standards. <i>Source: Administrative data</i>	Performance	Certified
3. Improvements to the agency's cybersecurity posture through the development and implementation of a zero-trust architecture and by upgrading the agency's infrastructure in alignment with the agency's multi-year IPV6 migration plan. <i>Source: Administrative records</i>	Performance	80% Compliance

Performance Goal 4.1.2 The NEA recruits and engages citizens as panelists who reflect the nation's geographic diversity.		
Indicators	Indicator Type	FY 25 Target
1. Percent of U.S. states, including the District of Columbia, represented by individuals serving on NEA panels. <i>Source: Administrative data</i>	Performance	100%
2. Percent of U.S. territories represented by individuals serving on NEA panels. <i>Source: Administrative data</i>	Other	Target not required
3. Percent of NEA panelists that express satisfaction with their participation in the panel process. <i>Source: Panelist survey</i>	Other	Target not required

Strategic Objective 4.2 Foster a Skilled, Agile, Diverse, and Cohesive Workforce.

Goal Leader/Lead Office

Office of the Deputy Chair of Management & Budget

Office of Human Resources

Office of Civil Rights and Equal Employment Opportunity

Believing that the agency’s most important asset is its people, the NEA is committed to embedding principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility into the agency’s work practices, to foster a safe place for employees to thrive. The NEA also invests in training and staff recognition programs, and promotes strong employee morale and work-life balance in order to attract, develop, and retain a talented and diverse staff who are empowered and equipped to execute a shared mission and vision for the agency. The Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) is administered each year in part to assess employee satisfaction with their workplace experience. Specifically, the intrinsic work experience index captures employee feelings of motivation and competency relating to their role in the workplace. The employee engagement score measures conditions that lead to engagement, or employee’s sense of purpose, which is evident in their display of dedication, persistence, and effort in their work or overall attachment to their organization and its mission. Taken together these indices serve as a measurement of employee satisfaction.

Performance Goal 4.2.1. NEA employees report a positive work culture and a high degree of satisfaction working at the NEA.		
Indicators	Indicator Type	FY 25 Target
1. Index score for employee engagement on OPM’s annual Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey. <i>Source: FEVS</i> ⁸	Performance	76%

Cross-Cutting Objective (CCO): The NEA Will Model Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Arts Through All of Its Activities and Operations.

Goal Leader/Lead Office

Office of Strategy, Programs, and Engagement
Office of Research and Analysis
Office of Civil Rights and Equal Employment Opportunity

In its founding legislation, the NEA was charged with the responsibility of increasing access to the arts, particularly to historically underserved populations—those whose opportunities to experience the arts are limited by geography, ethnicity, economics, or disability. Since its creation, the NEA has dedicated resources, developed leadership initiatives, and strengthened its partnerships with SAAs and RAOs to realize the agency’s mission to foster and sustain an environment in which the arts belong to

⁸ Adjustments to this measure may be required if FEVS indexes are changed in future years.

everyone in the United States.

The NEA continues to make progress in reducing barriers to arts participation across the nation. Most recently, an analysis showed that more than 43 percent of arts activities sponsored by NEA grants are held in census tracts where 20 percent or more of the population live below the poverty line. In addition, the NEA’s Partnership grants to SAAs and RAOs include funds for responding to the needs of underserved populations within states and regions.

The agency will monitor the distribution of grants to diverse demographic, geographic, and socioeconomic groups. It also will explore methods for increasing the diversity of organizations in the NEA’s applicant pool and grants portfolio. Related factors may include the various missions and budget sizes of applicant/grantee organizations, as well as first-time applicant status, and also the geographic and other characteristics of these organizations and the communities they serve.

This cross-cutting objective also refers to the NEA’s internal operations. In its day-to-day functioning, the agency aspires to model the principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility and equal employment opportunity principles to ensure effective management and accountability of federal resources.

Performance Goal CCO 1.1 The NEA supports projects and partnerships that engage populations reflecting the nation’s demographic, geographic, and socioeconomic diversity.		
Indicators	Indicator Type	FY 25 Target
1. Percent of NEA awards supporting projects that engaged diverse demographic groups. <i>Source: FDR, Census ACS data</i>	Performance	66%
2. Percent of subawards, through Partnership Agreements, supporting project activities that engaged diverse demographic groups. <i>Source: SAA/RAO FDR, Census ACS data</i>	Other	Target not required
3. Percent of NEA awards that supported project activities in rural areas or high-poverty neighborhoods. <i>Source: FDR, Census ACS data</i>	Performance	55%
4. Percent of subawards that supported project activities in rural areas or high-poverty neighborhoods. <i>Source: SAA/RAO FDR, Census ACS data</i>	Other	Target not required

Performance Goal CCO 1.2 The NEA will establish a model EEO program based on development of internal benchmarks.

Indicators	Indicator Type	FY 25 Target
1. Completion of six essential elements for a model EEO program as described in MD-715. ⁹ <i>Source: Administrative records</i>	Milestone	Six elements completed

⁹ MD-715's model EEO program, pursuant to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII), as amended, 42 U.S.C. § 2000e et seq., and Section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended, 29 U.S.C. § 791 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 (Pub. L. 110-325).

Research and Evaluation

The NEA continuously uses research and evaluation, across four strategic goals and one cross-cutting objective, to inform strategies and identify opportunities for improving agency performance and increasing program effectiveness. The following items highlight NEA-led research and evaluation efforts that have expanded the agency's knowledge of contextual factors affecting its performance plan—or that have shown how the NEA might improve performance on a specific goal or objective. Most of these studies were identified in the NEA's Learning Agenda, which is used to identify and pursue research questions pertaining to the agency's own activities and operations. Current or future research and evaluation activities are described in the agency's Strategic Plan.

Goal 1

The NEA has conducted research and evaluation studies that will inform its efforts to support opportunities for all people to participate in the arts and arts education. Research studies have enriched the agency's ability to respond to the changing nature of arts participation in the U.S., while evaluation studies have examined outcomes associated with NEA programs enabling equitable access to the arts. Specific studies that were under way or completed during the last fiscal year include:

American Rescue Plan Studies. In FY 2022, the NEA competitively awarded American Rescue Plan (ARP) grants to “help support jobs in the arts sector, keep the doors open to arts organizations nationwide, and assist the field in its response to and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.” Unlike the NEA's regular grant programs, ARP grants provided general operating support to arts organizations and did not include a matching requirement. A series of studies have been under way since FY 2022 to harvest findings from the agency's ARP grantmaking and to inform the NEA's traditional grantmaking practices. Findings from studies completed during FY 2022—a study of new applicants and a study of Local Arts Agency applicants—were reported in the FY 2022 APR. During FY 2023, the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies produced for the NEA a report of findings from a survey of state and jurisdictional agencies as well as regional arts organizations, providing insight into the impact of ARP funds allocated through NEA Partnership Agreements. Among the high-level findings, the agency learned that 46 state, regional, and jurisdictional arts agencies used NEA ARP funds to support a total of 1,599 arts organizations and 4,114 jobs. These arts organizations used roughly \$4.7 million to keep facilities in place and operational during a time of large-scale shutdowns.

National HBCU Study. During the past fiscal year, the NEA launched a mixed-methods study to describe how HBCUs currently support the arts and arts education as preparatory to careers in the arts and in transdisciplinary fields. The study also will produce recommendations on how HBCUs can strengthen and mobilize their arts assets (i.e., programs and facilities) and partnerships to meet regional workforce needs (both in

the arts and in other sectors that utilize skills and competencies gained through an arts education); detail HBCU interactions with public arts funders at the federal, regional, and state levels; and provide recommendations on how the NEA, as well as SAAs and RAOs, can engage further with HBCUs. A contract award for this study was made at the end of FY 2022; the study is expected to conclude in FY 2025.

Goal 2

Through this goal, the NEA intends to support the integration of the arts with strategies that promote the well-being and resilience of people and communities. Previous research studies have informed the agency's planning in support of this goal, while evaluation studies have supported program improvement or assessed the effectiveness of previous grant-making activities. Specific studies that were under way or completed during the last fiscal year include:

Evaluation of Creative Forces' Clinical Programs. NEA's Creative Forces clinical program cooperator, the Henry M. Jackson Foundation, is undertaking a comprehensive evaluation of Creative Forces' clinical programs. This project includes needs assessments and formative, process, and summative/impact evaluations. During FY 2023, an external summative evaluation began of the Music Therapy Longitudinal Outpatient Program. Several formative evaluation studies are under way or preparing to kick off, focusing on the Dance/Movement Therapy (DMT) DoD Intensive Outpatient Program, Rural Veterans Telerehabilitation Initiative (RVTRI), Fort Belvoir Family Art Therapy Program, Joint Base Lewis McChord (JBLM) Family Art Therapy Program, and Clinic to Community Continuum (C2CC) Program.

Also in FY 2023, the NEA announced a \$900,000 research award to Indiana University for Medical Research, which will collaborate with the Richard L. Roudebush VA Medical Center (Indianapolis, IN), to conduct a randomized controlled trial of music therapy for U.S. veterans with chronic pain. In November 2024, the NEA and the Henry M. Jackson Foundation convened a two-day summit to review progress of the Creative Forces clinical research portfolio and to chart new research directions for FY 2024 and beyond.

Evaluation of Creative Forces' Community Arts Engagement Program. The NEA Office of Research & Analysis plans to conduct an FY 2025 evaluation of individual-level outcomes associated with participation in arts programming provided by Community Arts Engagement Program grantees. During FY 2023, NEA's Creative Forces community engagement cooperator, the Mid-America Arts Alliance, piloted a survey to assess participant outcomes, as well as the role of arts engagement in advancing health, well-being, and quality of life for Creative Forces target populations. The cooperator also established a technical working group to collect feedback on the pilot study design, implementation, and findings that will inform planning of the FY 2025 evaluation. One of the key takeaways from the pilot study was that an active protocol for recruiting participants – in which grantees provided the evaluator with email addresses, and the evaluator contacted participants in advance of the arts program – was effective in

generating a strong response rate. The study also produced findings about the effectiveness of some published measures in documenting changes in participant outcomes. A statement of work for the FY 2025 evaluation will be prepared in FY 2024.

Evaluation of the National Folklife Network (NFN). The NEA has established the NFN through a cooperator, which is working with a cohort in each of these regions: rural areas of Northern Plains, Southern Plains, Rocky Mountain West, and Alaska, as well as three urban centers east of the Mississippi River. Each cohort consists of an anchor organization and related organizations and individuals, including but not limited to folk & traditional arts organizations, tribal communities or tribes, minority-serving institutions, federally-designated post-secondary institutions (e.g. Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal Colleges & Universities), colleges and universities, and artists.

The NFN cooperator, Southwest Folklife Alliance, in collaboration with the Alliance for California Traditional Arts and the First People’s Fund, contracted an evaluator to design and conduct a mixed-methods developmental evaluation of the process and launch of the NFN. The evaluator’s draft final report was received during FY 2023. While the report was not intended as summative in nature, the report documented important lessons learned during the NFN’s first two years, including the importance of building trust with Indigenous and African American communities, the challenges associated with building relationships and trust in an initiative that spans seven distinct regions, and the value of developing a “people’s glossary” of terms that the network would use to refer to their work and the communities the network seeks to connect.

Goal 3

The NEA supports this goal—to build capacity and infrastructure within the arts sector through knowledge-sharing, tools, resources, and evidence-based practices—primarily through its research program. External research about the arts’ impacts on individuals and communities is supported in part by the NEA through its Research Grants in the Arts grant program, which offers grants for research examining the value and impact of the arts. The NEA’s Research Labs program, which launched in FY 2017, funds transdisciplinary research teams. Both programs use the social and behavioral sciences to engage with the NEA’s five-year Research Agenda. Research studies in support of the NEA research agenda are also conducted by NEA staff and contractors. Specific studies that were under way or completed during the last fiscal year include:

Outcomes Study of Research Awards Program. The NEA intends to launch in FY 2024 a survey of NEA Research awardees to understand the extent to which the NEA’s research funding programs contribute to the stock of peer-reviewed literature about arts research, and whether NEA funding encourages research beyond the initial period of award. During FY 2023, the survey instrument was designed and will be submitted in early FY 2024 for OMB/OIRA clearance, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act.

Meanwhile, scientific papers, field reports, and other output from NEA research grantees continue to shape public policy conversations about the societal importance of the arts and arts education. Among research products in FY 2023 were “Investigating the Causal Effects of Arts Education,” published in *The Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, and based on a NEA-funded study that was also recognized by the U.S. Department of Education’s What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) as demonstrating “strong” evidence under the Every Student Succeeds Act. Another NEA-funded research project, addressing the arts’ potential benefits for community healthcare systems, yielded *Arts on Prescription: A Field Guide for U.S. Communities*.

Secondary Dataset Analyses. In October 2024, the NEA released two reports based on nationally representative data on arts participation trends in 2022. Together, *Arts Participation Patterns in 2022: Highlights from the Survey of Public Participation in the Arts*, and *Online Audiences for Arts Programming: A Survey of Virtual Participation Amid COVID-19*, exposed changing patterns of arts engagement—in terms of in-person and virtual arts attendance, personal creation and performance of art, literary reading, and learning in the arts—within the second full year of COVID’s arrival in the U.S. In FY 2024, the agency will release results from extensive demographic and geographic analysis of arts participation rates, and will investigate correlations between artistic and civic engagement. Also in this fiscal year, the NEA will publish results of analyses of several National Center for Education Statistics (U.S. Department of Education) longitudinal datasets, to report on access and exposure to the arts in childhood and youth, and social, emotional, and academic outcomes.

Local Arts Agencies Study. During the past fiscal year, the NEA launched a mixed-methods study to investigate the centrality of local arts agencies (LAAs) to local arts ecosystems and local civic infrastructure. Findings from the study will inform the NEA’s future engagement with LAAs through technical assistance and field convenings. The study’s first phase, which is currently under way, will result in a working national list of LAAs and technical assistance for identifying and tracking LAA applicants in the future; and, for a follow-up study (second phase), research questions, a research plan, and data collection instruments. A contract award for this study was made at the end of FY 2022; the first phase is expected to conclude in FY 2025.

Goal 4

The NEA rigorously reviews its management functions. The NEA Office of Inspector General (OIG) performs audits, evaluations, and reviews of operations and activities of NEA programs and recipients of NEA grants, cooperative agreements, and contracts. The OIG conducts independent and objective assessments and reports on internal controls, financial management, information technology, and other systems that affect NEA programs and recipients. Audit work is conducted according to criteria and methods outlined by the Government Accountability Office's Government Auditing Standards. Reviews, and evaluations are performed according to criteria and methods outlined by the Council of Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency's Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation. Reports are posted on the OIG's Reports webpage.

With respect to financial management, the NEA's OIG oversees an annual audit, which encompasses an independent and thorough review to ensure the agency's financial statements accurately and completely represent the agency's financial position. The OIG also oversees the annual review of the agency's compliance with the Federal Information Security Modernization Act (FISMA). The financial statement audit and FISMA review typically result in recommendations that inform the agency's strategic plan and efforts for improving programs and processes.

Human capital management reviews are essential for hiring, managing, training and retaining talented and high performing employees. To that end, the NEA regularly evaluates and acts on its human capital programs via Office of Personnel Management (OPM) audits and assessments and Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) reviews. Surveys of citizen-expert panelists who participate in reviewing applications for NEA awards offer valuable information that is used to improve the agency's processes for adjudicating grant proposals. Results from OPM's Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey provide critical data on employee engagement, sense of inclusion, dedication to the NEA mission, and commitment to personal accountability. To enhance all these measurements, the NEA plans in FY 2024 to design and implement a new metric involving more frequent assessments of organizational health.

Cross-Cutting Objective

The NEA supports this cross-cutting objective—to model diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in the arts through all of its activities and operations—by dedicating resources, developing leadership initiatives, and strengthening its partnerships with SAAs and RAOs to realize the agency's mission to foster and sustain an environment in which the arts belong to everyone in the United States. The agency will monitor the distribution of grants in support of widening its reach among diverse demographic, geographic, and socioeconomic groups. It also will explore methods for tracking and enlarging the diversity of organizations represented in the NEA's applicant pool and grants portfolio. Specific studies that were under way or completed during the last fiscal year include:

NEA Equity Action Plan. The [NEA Equity Action Plan](#) for fiscal years 2022-2026, developed by the agency's Equity and Access Working Group, was released in early 2022. In the Equity Action Plan, the NEA committed to developing a long-term monitoring and evaluation strategy using outcomes data to assess the plan's effectiveness. The NEA's Office of Research & Analysis prepared a measurement framework to support measurement of the Equity Action Plan. The framework identified process and outcome indicators, data sources, analytical methods, and the frequency and timeline for measurement. When possible, indicators were selected to align with the agency's annual performance plan. Under this measurement framework, an internal evaluation of the Equity Action Plan begins in the second quarter of FY 2023 and will be replicated annually through 2026.

ArtsHERE Program Evaluation. [ArtsHERE](#), the NEA's pilot equity initiative, is central to the agency's Equity Action Plan. The initiative will support capacity-building subgrants and technical assistance activities for a range of organizations throughout the arts and cultural ecosystem that have demonstrated a commitment to equity within their practices and programming and have undertaken consistent engagement with underserved groups/communities. ArtsHERE will also support sharing these organizations' stories with the broader arts and cultural sectors. The NEA has partnered with SouthArts, a Regional Arts Organization (RAO), to undertake ArtsHERE; the Wallace Foundation provided SouthArts with matching funds to support this initiative.

During FY 2023, the NEA engaged an evaluation contractor to work with the RAO and the NEA to develop a program theory of change and logic model and design a monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) plan to support ArtsHERE. The evaluation will generate products, including case studies, resources and tools, which share effective practices for arts and cultural organizations of various types to engage effectively with historically underserved communities and summarize lessons for the NEA, other RAOs, and the nonprofit arts sector.

Dance and Disability Field Scan. In 2016, with NEA support, AXIS Dance Company held a convening called *The Future of Physically Integrated Dance in the USA* at Gibney Dance Center in New York, NY. The event was followed by a series of regional convenings and a report on the three-year initiative. The initiative was the first of its kind in the U.S, and sought to assess the current state of the field of physically integrated dance and galvanize a multigenerational cohort of artists, educators, funders, presenters, service organizations, and other practitioners to better address the needs of professional dance artists with disabilities.

The NEA's resulting Dance and Disability Field Scan is intended to document and assess developments that have occurred at this intersection since the 2016 convening. The study will identify opportunities and challenges for disabled dance artists and disability dance programs to inform ways the agency can better support and advance disabled artists and the dance field as a whole. Study findings will provide evidence for future grant guideline updates and accessibility initiatives of the agency. A contract

award for this study was made at the end of FY 2022; the first phase of this study is expected to conclude in FY 2025.