

Challenge America offers support primarily to small and mid-sized organizations for projects that extend the reach of the arts to underserved populations—those whose opportunities to experience the arts are limited by geography, ethnicity, economics, or disability.

Funding through the  
Challenge America program,  
2004-2016:

\$36.2 million

## CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

Challenge America grants are small investments in underserved communities that have a big impact, representing an effective use of federal dollars.

- Challenge America is one of the few national funding opportunities available for emerging arts organizations.
- Challenge America grants regularly garner positive media attention, attesting to their public value for the community.
- Challenge America grantees often cite the seal of approval that their NEA award provides, making it easier for them to attract matching funds and enhance their project's visibility.

Challenge America has broad and balanced geographic reach, allowing the National Endowment for the Arts to put its mission to work providing all Americans with diverse opportunities for arts participation.

- Through 128 Challenge America grants awarded in 2016, organizations in 33 states received funding.
- Twenty percent of Challenge America grantees live in rural/non-metro communities which is close to the national rate of 17 percent, reflecting an equitable distribution of grants for the program.

With its emphasis on funding projects in underserved communities, Challenge America grants are key to engaging audiences that wouldn't normally have access to the arts.

- By requiring that projects serve at least one underserved population through any artistic discipline, Challenge America applicants often develop innovative outreach strategies to reach those populations, fostering innovation in local communities.

Challenge America serves as the National Endowment for the Arts' gateway category for emerging arts organizations, helping assure that the NEA serves as many organizations as possible.

- Typically, as many as one third of each year's Challenge America grantees are first-time NEA grantees.
- Since an application to Challenge America is often an organization's first application to the NEA, the application process helps build capacity for these organizations and leverage new resources in their community.

