



Fiscal Year 2024 Annual Performance Report

January 2025

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INTRODUCTION

The Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Annual Performance Report (APR) supports the National Endowment for the Arts Strategic Plan: 2022-2026. The Strategic Plan outlined the agency's strategic goals and objectives and the means and strategies to accomplish them. The Annual Performance Plan set out performance goals and indicators in support of the strategic objectives. This APR reviews and discusses the goals and indicators in light of past performance.

AGENCY AND MISSION INFORMATION

“The arts . . . belong to all the people of the United States.”¹

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 approximately 2,500 grants and cooperative agreements exceeding \$160 million², 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 2022, for example, arts and cultural production added 4.3 percent directly to the nation’s GDP, for a total just over \$1.1 trillion dollars. In the same year, the sector employed 4.9 million wage-and-salary workers whose total compensation was \$540.9 billion.³ 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.

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; and 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:

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

¹ National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act of 1965, as amended

² In FY 2024, the NEA issued 2,586 awards, totaling \$161 million

³ https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/2024_National_Brief-final.pdf (Accessed October 21, 2024)

All grant applications to the NEA are reviewed on the basis of artistic excellence and artistic 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, 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, but they also permit 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 helps 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, FY 2022-2026, which was issued in February 2022 and is available [online](#). The FY 2024 Annual Performance Plan (APP), which can be found on the agency’s [website](#), was based on the 2022-2026 Strategic Plan and described the performance goals and indicators necessary to assess the agency’s progress in accomplishing its strategic objectives. The FY 2022 – 2026 Strategic Plan also described planned actions and milestones to address the agency’s management priorities, research and evaluation activities that supported the development of the annual performance plan and strategic plan, and information on data validation and verification.

The FY 2024 APR reports on the progress of the National Endowment for the Arts’ FY 2022-2026 Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan outlines the agency’s strategic goals and objectives and the means and strategies to accomplish them. The APR reports on the performance goals and indicators in support of the strategic objectives. Performance and other indicators, prior year data across the 5-year term of the Strategic Plan, and status have been provided for each strategic objective.

National Endowment for the Arts Organizational Structure

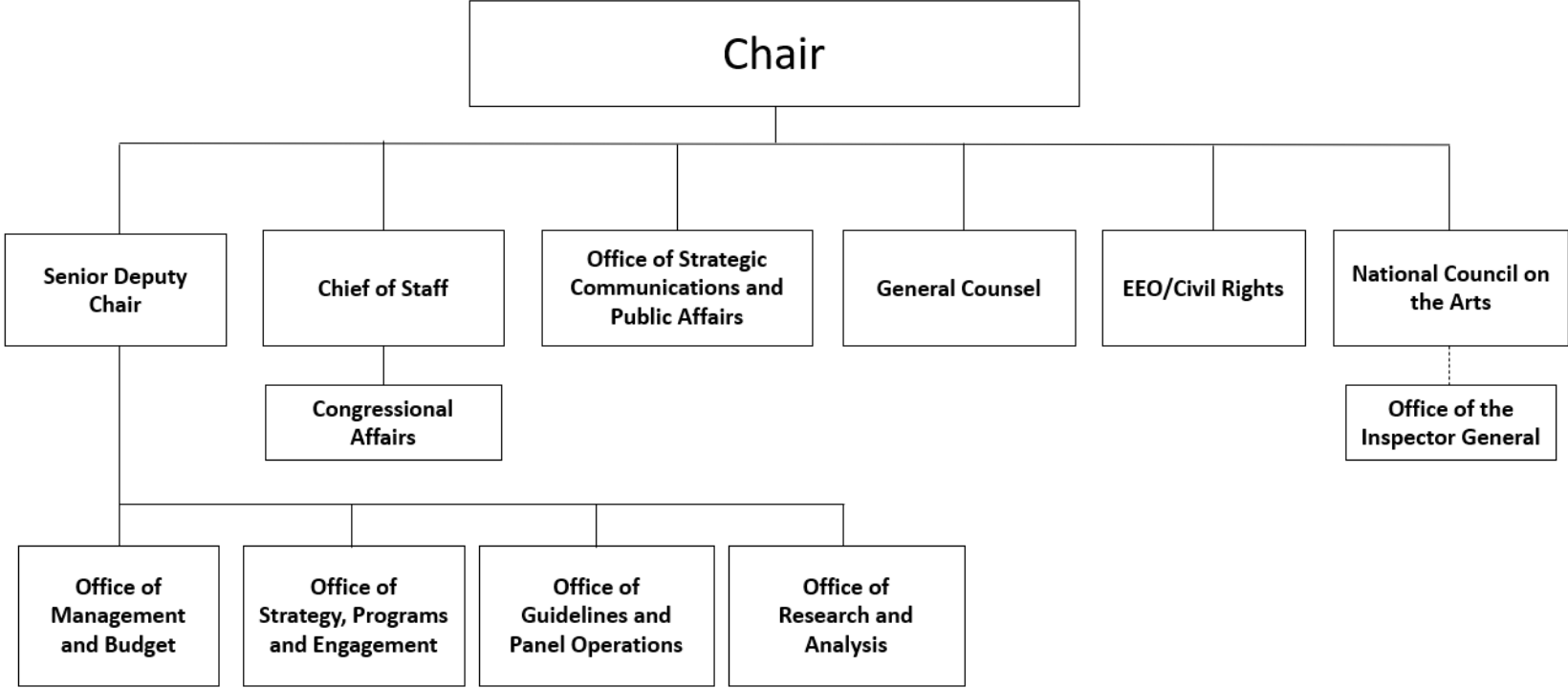


Fig. 1. National Endowment for the Arts Organizational Structure

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 NEA'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. Application data received through the Grant Application Form (GAF), are stored within the internal grants management database.

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.

Changes within these data sources are monitored and managed by the agency's ORA. Changes to underlying data and data collections are reviewed and validated by ORA staff. At times, changes to data may impact measures or analyses, at which point, ORA staff document impacts and/or update indicators to reflect the change. During FY 2024, minimal changes to underlying data and data collections were documented. The agency continued to pursue migration to cloud-based data storage solutions (see Indicator 4.1.1.3), but this work did not impact major database structures. At most, small changes to data were recorded such as the update of the "Media Arts" discipline to "Film & Media Arts." This update was completed globally, so that data accuracy was maintained.

Throughout this document, data are reported through FY 2024 unless otherwise noted. A significant exception is FDR data. Within this report, the most recent data available from direct grantee's FDRs derive from FY 2023 or earlier. This factor is attributable to the 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 2023 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 2024. 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 2023 because that is the year in which the grant was awarded.

Similarly, this document also contains 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. The most recent data available from SAAs and RAOs is from FY 2022 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 2022 and the subaward is granted in the SAA's FY 2023, 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.

Because of the delay in receipt of FDR data, it is important to identify the overall percentage of FDRs received to date to establish the context for these indicators. Table 1 provides this information for the performance period reported throughout this document. Given that only 50% of FDRs have been received for grants awarded in FY 2023 and 6% of FDRs have been received for grants awarded in FY 2024, counts for all indicators that rely on FDR data throughout this report for FY 2023 and 2024 may be low or high in comparison to FY 2020 through FY 2022. Most indicators sourced from FDR data will report "data not available" for FY 2024. Most indicators sourced from SAA/RAO FDR data will report "data not available" for FY 2023 – FY 2024.

Table 1: Number and Percentage of FDRs Received – 2020-2024

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Number of FDRs received	3,030	2,229	2,850	1,369	148
Percentage of FDRs received	96%	94%	87%	50%	6%
Number of SAA/RAO FDRs Received	59	54	37	0	0
Percentage of SAA/RAO FDRs Received	95%	87%	60% ⁴	0%	0%

Data Validation and Verification

The NEA 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 NEA 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 NEA senior management to determine if progress is adequate.
- Limitations to the data at the required level of accuracy:** NEA 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

⁴ FY 2022 FDRs have been received from 37 SAAs and 0 RAOs. Of FDRs received, 3 of 37 were returned to the grantee for corrections and not included in this analysis due to containing omissions and/or errors at the time of submission.

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 2024 APR periodically refers to “underserved communities.” 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. For most indicators 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.⁵
- Rural Area: A census tract outside of metropolitan statistical area.⁶
- Predominantly Non-White Area: A Census tract with over 50% of the population reporting a race and/or ethnicity other than white.⁷

Indicators relating to public participation in agency events or technical assistance activities, such as Indicator 1.2.1.1, use a different definition due to the availability of observable data points. The agency does not collect street-level address data from members of the public attending NEA events, so the agency cannot determine if event participants fall within the above definitions of underserved areas. However, during FY 2024, the agency began a pilot data collection to offer an optional ZIP Code field in select event registrations. For participants that supply ZIP Code data, the agency can determine if the participant’s ZIP Code is considered underserved, if the ZIP Code meets at least one of the following three criteria:

- High Poverty ZIP Code: A ZIP Code tabulation area with 20% or more of the population below the poverty line.⁸
- Rural Area: A ZIP Code tabulation area outside of metropolitan statistical area.⁹

⁵ High Poverty Areas are identified based on income and poverty data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s [American Community Survey](#).

⁶ 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.

⁷ Predominant Race is based on race and ethnicity data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s [American Community Survey](#)

⁸ High Poverty ZIP Codes are identified based on income and poverty data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s [American Community Survey](#).

⁹ Rural Areas are determined using the most recent (but not later than the fiscal year reported) metro delineation file from the [Census Bureau](#). ZIP Codes within metropolitan statistical areas are considered urban. All other ZIP Codes are considered rural.

- Predominantly Non-White Area: A ZIP Code tabulation area with over 50% of the population reporting a race and/or ethnicity other than white.¹⁰

In FY 2022, the NEA reviewed its grant data-collection forms to identify data gaps in reporting demographics of populations served and, as a result, modified questions on its grant application and FDR forms. For example, the agency added optional questions to the Grant Application Form (GAF) pertaining to the applicant’s intent to address underserved communities with the project activities and the organization’s leadership and staffing. Further, for both the GAF and FDR forms, the agency revised questions collecting data on key project partners to include the partner organization entity type with additional options, such as minority-serving institutions.

ORA also has modified methods of measuring data related to underserved communities. For example, the office previously used a measure of predominant race at the county level, whereas recently, the office transitioned to measuring predominant race at the census tract level. Further, the inclusion of micropolitan statistical areas in measures of rurality is also reflective of a recent measurement change.

Since performance targets may have been established prior to these measurement adjustments, the targets may underestimate the agency’s performance. Where observed, the updated measures will establish a new baseline and target for subsequent years in the strategic plan period.

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

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 ZIP Code, rural ZIP Code, or a predominantly non-white ZIP Code.
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 ¹¹	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.

¹⁰ Predominant Race is based on race and ethnicity data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s [American Community Survey](#).

¹¹ Data for Indicator 1.2.2.1 and 1.2.2.2 is 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.

Table 3 (continued): Definitions of Underserved Communities in Performance Indicators

#	Indicator	Definition
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.

Differences in Strategic Goals

As mentioned, the FY 2024 APR reports on the progress of the NEA’s FY 2022-2026 Strategic Plan, which was issued in February 2022. Many measures included in this APR include five years of data, from FY 2020-2024. Application data from FY 2020-2021 were collected under the National Endowment for the Arts’ previous Strategic Plan, for FY 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 2020-2021 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 4: 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 5 (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) 2024 Annual Performance Plan (APP) supports the NEA Strategic Plan for FY 2022-2026. 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 2024 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 assessed during FY 2024. In many cases, these indicators track incremental progress toward achieving the performance goals.

Targets are identified for performance indicators only. Since many performance indicators are new, targets have not yet been established in every case, as they will rely on collection of new baseline data and/or revisions to data-collection instruments; this has been indicated by "baseline data not available." "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 earlier 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 exploring the use of data science methods to more efficiently analyze textual data from grantee reports. Also, implementation of the APP is contingent on the agency's ability to maintain funding levels and staffing for this work.

While the current strategic plan began in FY 2022, many outlined programmatic changes could not be implemented until later in the plan period. For example, the plan outlined strategic goals that resulted in updates to data collection forms, such as the GAFs and FDRs. Aligning with the strategic goal of expanding public access to the NEA's programs, questions in the GAF were revised to reduce applicant burden and allow applicants to provide more relevant information. The field previously titled "Summary of the background/history of your organization" was revised to "Organizational context for project activities", letting applicants establish an organizational need or strategy relating to their submitted project, instead of restricting the field to organizational history that may not be completely relevant. In a similar vein, to further reduce burden on applicants, the agency developed a supplemental budget worksheet based on previous applicant questions and confusion around that aspect of the application.

These data collections are subject to Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) clearance cycles. The most recent guidelines approval cycle did not align with the current strategic plan period, resulting in delayed implementation. These delays can be seen in the following report, as FY 2024 marks the first round of applicants responding to new grant-related data collections added during this strategic plan period.

Similarly, the strategic plan included strategies that required the development of new performance indicators based on data not previously collected. Some of the newly developed data collections were implemented after the start of the strategic plan period. For example, the collection of geographic data from event participants required a cross-agency effort for approvals and implementation. Similarly, collecting data on NEA resources and events made available to the public required many staff to incorporate new tracking methods into their workflows, requiring a longer implementation “on ramp.” In the following report, such indicators report “Baseline Data Unavailable” for indicators where data collection did not begin until FY 2023 or later. While baseline data is unavailable to report, much work was completed throughout that period to set-up data collection infrastructure.

In the coming strategic plan, the agency is working to align the next PRA clearance submissions. Ideally, this will allow the agency to report on new performance indicators earlier in the strategic planning period. As the NEA is a grantmaking agency, there will always be a delay in collecting some data from grantees, but aligning changes in guidelines and reports with new strategic goals will allow for more timely performance reporting in the future.

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

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 Arts¹² found the overall rate of arts attendance dropped nearly six percentage points between 2017 and 2022, and just under half (48 percent) of all adults attended at least one arts event in person. Yet attendance rose for some performing arts activities not specifically listed on the survey, with increases reported for some demographic subgroups including adults who had attended at least some college but had not completed graduate school.

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 the Deputy Chair for Programs & Partnerships

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

¹² <https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/2022-SPPA-final.pdf> (Accessed December 5, 2024)

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. In recent years, the agency has focused attention on new applicants, defined as applicants applying to the agency for the first time, and new grantees, defined as applicants who are receiving an NEA grant for the first time, even if they have applied previously. The NEA has begun to track new applicants and new grantees, as well as develop resources and specific outreach to assist those unfamiliar with applying for and managing federal grants.

Performance Goal 1.1.1:

The NEA increases the percentage of grant applications received from first-time applicants.

Indicator	Type	2024 Target	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024
1.1.1.1. Percent of applications received and adjudicated by the NEA, by first-time applicant status. <i>Source: eGMS</i>	<i>Perf.</i>	9.00%	5.16%	12.76%	26.41%	8.67%	13.93%
1.1.1.2. Success rate of applications received and adjudicated by the NEA, by first-time applicant status. <i>Source: eGMS</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Target Not Required</i>	37.60%	31.19%	10.54%	30.30%	28.65%

*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 artistic 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.

Indicator 1.1.1.1 presents the percent of applications received and adjudicated by the NEA by first-time applicant status. As seen from the table above, a range from 5.16% to 26.41% of NEA applicants applied to the NEA for the first time from FY 2020 to FY 2024. Success rates for these applications as presented in Indicator 1.1.1.2 ranged from 10.54% to 37.60%. New applicants represented 13.93% of FY 2024 applications, compared to the agency target of 9.00%.

The relative increase in applications from new applicants in FY 2021 and 2022 can be partially attributed to the pandemic relief funding programs established through the CARES¹³ Act and the

¹³ CARES: With \$75 million appropriated to the National Endowment for the Arts through the CARES Act, the NEA awarded 40% of the funds directly to state and regional arts agencies by April 30 to distribute through their funding programs. Sixty percent of the funds were designated for direct grants to nonprofit arts organizations to preserve jobs and help support organizations forced to close operations due to the spread of COVID-19; these grants were awarded by July 1, 2020.

American Rescue Plan¹⁴ (ARP). The NEA encouraged applications to the ARP grant program from a variety of organizations and provided numerous resources for navigating the application process, with a focus on outreach to new applicants. As a result, the NEA received over 7,500 grant applications from arts nonprofit organizations, 41% of which were from applicants that had not applied to the NEA in the past 10 years and were considered new applicants. About one-fourth (27%) of total ARP grantees had not received NEA funding in the past 10 years and were considered new grantees.

The low FY 2022 success rate for new applicants can also be contributed to the ARP grant program. This success rate is greatly impacted by the amount of ARP funding available compared to the vast number of applicants received. For example, the ARP Grants to Organizations program received over 7,500 applications, requesting approximately \$695 million, far outweighing the \$58 million in available funding for the program. This resulted in a low success rate for ARP, causing the overall success rates for FY 2022 to skew lower as well.

The NEA has been working to evaluate its work with new applicants and new grantees during the ARP grant program, with the aim of identifying practices help to broaden and strengthen the applicant pool for the agency's traditional grant programs. Since FY 2022, the agency has implemented strategies such as informal applicant question and answer sessions, specialty guidance for first time federal applicants, and newsletter series such as "NEA 101" that offer digestible application and grants management tips. The slight increase in applications from first-time applicants in FY 2024 could be partially contributed to the institutionalization of these strategies in recent years.

Beyond the ARP program, success rates for first-time applicants, as well as for other subsets of applicants, have been experiencing a slight decline since FY 2020. This trend can be partially attributed to rising numbers of received applications seen in recent years, and the rising funding amounts requested. Since FY 2020, the number of applications received in the agency's principal grant program, Grants for Arts Projects, has increased by 30%. In the same period, the total funding requested by applicants in that program increased by 37%. This two-fold increase results in lower success rates seen across NEA programs.

¹⁴ ARP: The American Rescue plan allocated \$135 million to the National Endowment for the Arts to support organizations and jobs in the arts sector that have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The NEA awarded 40% of the allocation to state art agencies and regional arts organizations by April 29, 2021 for distribution through their funding programs. The remaining 60% of funds were awarded directly to 635 arts nonprofit organizations by January 27, 2022.

Performance Goal 1.1.2:

The NEA increases the number of communities that host NEA grantee organizations and NEA-supported project activities.

Indicator	Type	2024 Target	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024
1.1.2.1. Number of unique communities that contain NEA grantee organizations. <i>Source: eGMS</i>	<i>Perf.</i>	677	760	631	788	721	677
1.1.2.2. Number of unique communities where NEA award-supported project activities took place. <i>Source: FDR</i>	<i>Perf.</i>	1579	1,633	2,711	2,880	1,425	<i>Data Not Available</i>

Another way the NEA strives to expand access to the arts is by engaging a wide range of communities across the nation through NEA grantees and NEA-supported project activities. As seen in Indicator 1.1.2.1 in the table above, the NEA supported grantees in 677 unique communities during FY 2024, meeting the performance goal of 677 communities. While FDR project location data from FY 2024 are unavailable, it is known that the NEA reached 1,425 unique communities through NEA-supported project activities in FY 2023 based on FDRs received to date. The NEA will report on the FY 2024 performance goal in the FY 2025 performance report once FDRs from FY 2024 awards are received.

By observing the number of unique communities in which the NEA has funded a grant award, the NEA can get a clearer picture of its reach. The number of unique communities is a count of distinct city and state combinations of grantee organization locations. For example, using this method allows the count to avoid duplicating communities, but ensures that communities with similar names are not missed (i.e., three awards from organizations in Portland, Maine and Portland, Oregon would be counted as two unique communities.).

Variation in the number of unique communities containing NEA grantee organizations per year is expected, since the annual grantee pool is subject to the organizations that apply for funding. During any grant cycle, the NEA may receive several applications from one community, meaning that multiple organizations in that community may receive awards, lowering the number of unique communities served. In awarding funding, the NEA ensures geographic diversity of grantee organizations to the best of its ability, dependent on the applications received.

Though varied, the number of unique communities containing grantee organizations has experienced a downward trend, decreasing by 11% since 2020, as seen in the table above for Indicator 1.1.2.1. However, it is vital to remember that factors beyond geography determine the selection of applications for award. All grant applications to the NEA are reviewed on the basis of artistic excellence and artistic merit, 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. While

geography is one factor considered, more or fewer unique communities may be funded, depending on the artistic excellence and merit of applications received.

Another factor influencing the number of unique communities that contain grantee organizations, could be the dissolution of the Arts Engagement in American Communities program in FY 2022. This small, invitational grant program ensured the agency funded an organization with offices physically located in each congressional district, each year. The geographic focus of this program certainly impacted the number of unique communities served, but the location of organizational offices does not always represent where project activities are taking place. In dissolving this grant opportunity, the agency shifted focus from providing direct funding to organizations located in each congressional district to ensuring that the NEA — via *all* its means, grants, initiatives, subgrants, resources, events, technical assistance — benefits the entire nation, each year. This intentional shift, while partially contributing to the decline seen above, also represented an opportunity for the agency to better aligning programming with its strategic goals.

While the number of communities where NEA award-supported project activities has also experienced a decline since FY 2022, this can be partially attributed to the lag in receiving FDRs. The NEA has only received 50% of FDRs from FY 2023 awardees. Over the next year, as the NEA receives additional FDR data, this indicator is expected to rise.

Performance Goal 1.1.3:

The NEA increases the number of communities that host NEA grantee organizations and NEA-supported project activities.

Indicator	Type	2024 Target	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024
1.1.3.1. Percent of NEA-supported projects that identify, as strategic partners, organizations outside the arts sector. <i>Source: FDR, GAF</i>	<i>Perf.</i>	40%	58.88%	69.73%	70.55%	86.93%	62.64%
1.1.3.2. Percent of NEA-supported projects that identify minority-serving institutions of higher education as strategic partners. <i>Source: GAF</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Target Not Required</i>	<i>Baseline data not available</i>	<i>Baseline data not available</i>	<i>Baseline data not available</i>	<i>Baseline data not available</i>	4.62%

In expanding access to programs and award-supported projects, many NEA grantees rely on strategic partners to bolster their reach. Strategic partners are defined as additional groups, organizations, or institutions contributing in some way to a funded grant project with the purpose of improving the outcome. By engaging non-arts sector partners—for example, organizations working in education, local government, or the private sector—NEA grantees can more successfully increase arts access for all by expanding reach to new audiences. In the current

performance plan, the NEA focuses on measuring two types of organizational partners: organizations outside of the arts sector and minority-serving institutions of higher education.

Previously, the NEA collected partner information in FDRs. From FY 2024 forward, this information is also collected at the time of application on the Grant Application Form (GAF), signifying a change in measurement between FY 2023 and FY 2024. For the FY 2023 APR and previous reports, this indicator reported the percentage of NEA-supported projects identifying non-arts partners at the time of award close out, as opposed to the time of application. As seen in the table above for Indicator 1.1.3.1, a range of 58.88 % to 86.93% of NEA-supported projects identified a non-arts partner at the time of award close out between FY 2020 and FY 2023. Looking at FY 2024 in the same table, 62.64% of NEA-supported projects identified non-arts partners at the time of application submission. The FY 2024 indicator will establish a new baseline for performance targets moving forward.

The addition of collecting data on partner types at the application stage is an example of the misalignment between PRA clearance schedules and the strategic planning period.¹⁵ Collecting this additional data is a direct result of new strategies and objectives in the strategic plan enacted in FY 2022. However, at that point, FY 2022 awards were reviewed and awarded, and FY 2023 grant program guidelines were finalized. The next opportunity to update guidelines was for FY 2024 programs, resulting in FY 2024 marking the first year that applicants responded to these new questions.

The change in collecting partner organization information in the GAF, allows the NEA to establish a baseline for Indicator 1.1.3.2, “Percent of NEA-supported projects that identify minority-serving institutions of higher education as strategic partners.” In FY 2024, 4.62% of NEA-supported projects identified minority-serving institutions as partner organizations at the time of application, as shown in the table above. Minority-serving institutions include Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian Serving Institutions (AANH), Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI), Historically Black Colleges or Universities (HBCU), and Tribal Colleges or Universities (TCU).

Strategic Objective 1.2

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

Goal Leader/Lead Office

Office of the Deputy Chair for Programs & Partnerships
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

¹⁵ See [Performance Framework](#)

mapping allow the agency to target historically underserved areas more effectively in its engagement efforts.¹⁶

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 American community. 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 organizations that have been underserved by NEA programs.

Performance Goal 1.2.1:

The NEA increases engagement with potential applicant organizations in underserved communities.

Indicator	Type	2024 Target	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024
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>	<i>Perf.</i>	<i>Baseline Data Not Available</i>	<i>Baseline Data Not Available</i>	<i>Baseline Data Not Available</i>	<i>Baseline Data Not Available</i>	<i>Baseline Data Not Available</i>	438 ¹⁷
1.2.1.2. Percent of applications received and adjudicated by the NEA from organizations located in underserved communities. <i>Source: eGMS</i>	<i>Perf.</i>	54.00%	54.91%	56.39%	55.09%	54.24%	55.11%
1.2.1.3. Success rate of applications received and adjudicated by the NEA from organizations located in underserved communities. <i>Source: eGMS</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Target Not Required</i>	56.25%	56.27%	57.76%	55.68%	55.23%

*See previous note on the success rate of applications.

¹⁶ For a definition of “underserved,” see [Underserved Communities](#)

¹⁷ Indicator 1.2.1.1. is reported for a sample of three technical assistance events provided by the NEA and should not be considered representative of all organizations engaged. The measure reported is considered a pilot test of data collection, and FY 2025 will establish a baseline for the remainder of the strategic planning period.

One way the NEA aims to monitor engagement with potential applicant organizations is through technical assistance opportunities during the application process. These opportunities include activities such as office hours and instructional videos. Beginning in FY 2024, the NEA began a pilot study to collect geographic information from organizations registering for technical assistance events. Prior to this pilot study, geographic data was not collected for event registrations. As registrations are not offered for all NEA events, and events are managed by a variety of offices across the agency, collecting these data required a cross-agency effort between research, events, and program staff, resulting in a longer implementation process than some other indicators. As such, the NEA cannot report on this indicator prior to FY 2024.

During FY 2024, the NEA offered an optional ZIP Code field in registration forms for three agency events, testing if participants would supply the optional information and if any conclusions could be drawn from the data. Events offering this optional data collection included Peer Review 101 for Arts and Culture Grants, a webinar detailing the role of review panelists in NEA grantmaking; Smart Growth Network, a national alliance meeting of leaders working towards healthy, sustainable, equitable, and prosperous communities; and the Our Town FY 2025 Grant Guidelines Webinar, a presentation providing information and technical assistance to Our Town applicants. These three events exemplify a wide breadth of the NEA's technical assistance offerings and offer a sample of the type of data that may be available through broader data collection.

From the three events where data were collected, the agency received 793 registrations. Of the submitted registrations, 756 individuals supplied the optional ZIP Code data, about 95% of registrants. This response rate exceeded expectations and provided evidence for expanding the optional field to all agency registration forms. Of the supplied ZIP Codes, 743 registrations matched to a valid U.S. ZIP Code tabulation area and were included in analysis.

As seen in the table above, Indicator 1.2.1.1. reports that 438 organizations located in underserved communities¹⁸ were engaged through three technical assistance events, about 59% of registrants. This indicator should not be considered representative of all organizations engaged. Starting in FY 2025, the agency will expand the implementation of the optional ZIP Code field for all agency event registrations. As such, the NEA expects to report Indicator 1.2.1.1. in FY 2025, establishing a baseline for the remainder of the strategic planning period.

Currently, the NEA can evaluate the applications received from organizations in underserved communities¹⁹—shown in the above table for Indicator 1.2.1.2 and 1.2.1.3. From FY 2020-2024, a range from 54.24% to 56.39% of applications are received from such applicant organizations. The top of the range, seen in 2021, can be attributed to the pandemic and resulting relief opportunities with increased outreach to underserved communities. After a slight drop over the following two years, in FY 2024 the number of applications increased very slightly, still meeting the NEA performance goal of 54% of applications. The success rates for these applicants have remained similarly steady, ranging from 55.23% to 57.76% during the same time period.

¹⁸ A definition for underserved communities in this indicator can be found in [Table 2](#).

¹⁹ A definition for underserved communities in this indicator can be found in [Table 2](#).

Performance Goal 1.2.2:

The NEA increases engagement with potential applicant organizations that primarily address underserved communities.

Indicator	Type	2024 Target	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024
1.2.2.1 Percent of applications received and adjudicated by the NEA from organizations primarily addressing underserved communities. <i>Source: eGMS, GAF</i>	<i>Perf.</i>	<i>Baseline Data Not Available</i>	<i>Baseline Data Not Available</i>	<i>Baseline Data Not Available</i>	<i>Baseline Data Not Available</i>	<i>Baseline Data Not Available</i>	69.44%
1.2.2.2. Success rate of applications received and adjudicated by the NEA from organizations primarily addressing underserved communities. <i>Source: eGMS, GAF</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Target Not Required</i>	<i>Baseline Data Not Available</i>	<i>Baseline Data Not Available</i>	<i>Baseline Data Not Available</i>	<i>Baseline Data Not Available</i>	71.12%

*See previous note on the success rate of applications.

Like Indicator 1.1.3.2, the newest iterations of guidelines and information collection forms include the opportunity for applicants to express a primary intent to address underserved communities,²⁰ marking another example of the misalignment between PRA clearance schedules and the strategic planning period.²¹ As these data were not previously collected, NEA cannot report on Indicators 1.2.2.1 or 1.2.2.2 for FY 2023 or prior years. As seen in the table above, FY 2024 includes data from the first grant cycle with updated guidelines and collection forms. From these data, 69.44% of FY 2024 applicants reported their projects were intended to primarily address underserved communities, with a success rate of 71.12%. This measure establishes a baseline for this indicator.

While data on applicant’s intent to address underserved communities was not collected until FY 2024, the agency has been actively assessing its work with such populations. For example, the Challenge America program has been exclusively funding projects working with underserved communities since 2001. These projects, representing an average of approximately 10% of awards per year, are only a portion of funded projects with this intent. The agency regularly funds projects with similar intent in other funding programs but cannot identify these projects analytically because the intent is inferred through the application narrative, not through a direct application question. This means the agency cannot report on this indicator prior to FY 2024. Collecting data about the intent to address underserved communities allows for a more accurate picture of the NEA’s commitment to funding these projects in FY 2024 onward.

²⁰ A definition for underserved communities in this indicator can be found in [Table 2](#).

²¹ See [Performance Framework](#)

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 K-12 students. However, 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).

Performance Goal 1.3.1:

The NEA engages underserved youth in arts education through activities supported by its awards and partnerships.

Indicator	Type	2024 Target	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024
1.3.1.1. Percent of arts education projects located in underserved communities and that directly engaged youth. <i>Source: FDR</i>	<i>Perf.</i>	67.00%	30.56%	52.76%	55.61%	54.34%	<i>Data not available</i>
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>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Target not required</i>	55.02%	61.96%	58.40%	<i>Data not available</i>	<i>Data not available</i>

The NEA aims to engage underserved youth in arts education through direct awards and subaward programs through State and Regional partners. Projects that directly engage youth are considered projects reporting any children/youth benefitted in the FDR, through an “in person” or “virtual” arts experience. Grantees report the number of children/youth engaged with the arts, whether through attendance at arts events, participation in arts learning, interaction with arts or artists, or use of online or mobile arts components (e.g., podcasts, live web streaming, mobile applications, online videos/audio/games, e-book or e-reader downloads, distance learning, internet-based artworks, online collections/ exhibitions, etc.).

From FY 2020 to FY 2023, a range of 30.56% to 55.61% of NEA-supported arts education projects were located in underserved communities and directly engaged youth. It is notable that the lower end of the range (30.56%) was seen in FY 2020. The relatively lower percentage in this year can be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic, as many grantee organizations had to cease operations or cancel programming, which led to fewer children/youth engaged overall.

This trend is also seen with State and regional partners, where a range of 55.02% to 61.96% of subawards supported arts education projects that engaged youth in underserved communities from FY 2020 to 2022. The lower end of this range is also seen during FY 2020 and can be partially attributed to the pandemic. These percentages are likely also impacted by the number of FDRs received ([see Table 1](#)) but still illustrate a picture of the NEA’s reach in the realm of arts education.

Performance Goal 1.3.2:

The NEA supports the arts education sector with convenings, research, and technical assistance.

Indicator	Type	FY 2024 Target	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024
1.3.2.1. Number of NEA-supported convenings, research products, and technical assistance opportunities made available to the arts education sector. <i>Source: Administrative data</i>	<i>Perf.</i>	49	<i>Baseline Data Not Available</i>	<i>Baseline Data Not Available</i>	<i>Baseline Data Not Available</i>	48	64

As mentioned previously, the NEA strives to support the arts education sector beyond grant funding opportunities. NEA staff routinely participate in and support a variety of activities that foster arts education in the United States. For example, NEA staff offer virtual technical assistance meetings for groups participating in the [Collective Impact initiative](#), provide grants workshops to arts education groups, and participate in panels at arts education-related conferences. Over FY 2024, 64 NEA-supported convenings, products, and technical assistance opportunities were made available to the arts education sector, as shown in the above table for Indicator 1.3.2.1. This is an increase from FY 2023, the first year the NEA reported on this indicator. While not indicating a positive trend line, the increase from FY 2023 to FY 2024 could be due to an increased focus on technical assistance and outreach activities. The increase is likely also impacted by expanded tracking efforts to record such convenings, research products, and technical assistance opportunities for the purpose of reporting.

As previously mentioned, the FY 2022 – FY 2026 Strategic Plan resulted in the development of performance indicators based on new data collections. Prior to this strategic plan, the agency did not actively track events, products, or technical assistance activities, meaning data is unavailable prior to FY 2023. As such activities are managed throughout the agency by a variety of staff, tracking required cross-agency buy-in and changes to workflows. During the first plan year, the agency was unable to track these activities due to the implementation of the plan occurring throughout the fiscal year. In FY 2023, the agency began tracking efforts, which were further improved in FY 2024.

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 2022, the most recent year for which such data are available, the U.S. exported \$21.0 billion more in arts and cultural goods and services than it imported from other countries.²² 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 with 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 the arts education sector with convenings, research, and technical assistance.

Indicator	Type	FY 2024 Target	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024
1.4.1.2. Number of NEA awards that support the international exchange of artists and arts and cultural traditions. <i>Source: eGMS</i>	<i>Perf.</i>	34	<i>Baseline Data Not Available</i>	<i>Baseline Data Not Available</i>	<i>Baseline Data Not Available</i>	36	23
1.4.1.3. 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>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Target Not Required</i>	24	24	24	22	18

As outlined in the FY 2022-2026 Strategic Plan, the NEA strives to promote the international exchange of artists and arts and cultural traditions. The addition of this goal created a new outcome to which awards could be assigned.²³ The awards coded as meeting this goal consisted of activities relating to the international exchange of artists, arts, and culture. However, like application and reporting forms,²⁴ goal coding was complete for FY 2022 awards before the FY 2022-2026 Strategic Plan was implemented. For this reason, FY 2023 marked the first year that

²²https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/2024_National_Brief-final.pdf (Accessed Dec 5, 2024.)

²³ For more information on goals and outcomes, see [Differences in Strategic Goals](#)

²⁴ See [Performance Framework](#)

applications were coded as meeting this goal, and data are unavailable for FY 2020 through FY 2022.

As seen in the table above for Indicator 1.4.1.2, the NEA awarded funding to 23 projects providing opportunity for international exchange in FY 2024. While this is a decrease from the previous year, variation is expected as the indicator depends on the applications received and their proposed projects. Projects meeting this goal include NEA-supported national initiatives such as a Performing Arts Discovery and U.S. Artists International, as well as grant projects funded through annual opportunities like Grants for Arts Projects. For example, in FY 2024, the NEA supported Blair Thomas & Company in Chicago, Illinois to support the Chicago International Puppet Theater Festival. This citywide celebration of puppetry includes performances, workshops, and symposia featuring emerging and established puppet artists from around the world.

Similarly, the NEA fosters international exchange through literature as well. Through the Literature Fellowships in Translation program, the agency makes available literary works from around the world, enriching the American people's horizons as creative, innovative thinkers and citizens of the world. From FY 2020 to FY 2024, a range of 18 to 24 awards each year supported the translation of specific works of prose, poetry, or drama from other languages into English, as shown in the above table for Indicator 1.4.1.3. This is another indicator that is partially dependent on the applications received. Funding decisions, including the number of awards, is dependent on the excellence, merit, number, and scope of applications received. Looking over a wider scope of time, for instance since FY 2015, the range of award numbers has stayed consistently between 18 and 25 awards per year.

Previously, the NEA reported Indicator 1.4.1.1, percent of artists participating in the NEA-supported USArtists International program who report benefits for their professional and career development. In FY 2022, a survey of artists participating in the NEA-supported USArtists International program found that 96% of artists reported benefits for their professional and career development. Since the USArtists International program was converted from a cooperative agreement to a grant in FY 2023, the NEA discontinued use of this performance indicator in FY 2024, as such, the indicator is not reported in the above table.

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 Advisor on Innovation to the Chair

Office of Accessibility

Office of Research & Analysis

In partnership with U.S. Departments of Defense (DoD) and Veterans Affairs (VA) 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.

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.

Indicator	Type	FY 2024 Target	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024
2.1.1.1. Number of service members served by Creative Forces clinical creative arts therapists. <i>Source: Clinical documentation</i>	<i>Perf.</i>	2,500	2,376	2,553	2,982	2,785	1,944
2.1.1.2. Number of therapeutic encounters facilitated by Creative Forces clinical creative arts therapists. <i>Source: Clinical documentation</i>	<i>Perf.</i>	13,000	12,182	14,119	13,198	12,606	13,070

Indeed, the Creative Forces program is essential to the NEA’s goal of engaging individuals in activities with the intent of advancing their health and well-being through the arts. In FY 2024, Creative Forces clinical creative arts therapists served 1,944 service members through more than 13,070 therapeutic encounters, as shown in the table above. While the reported numbers of service members served is a decrease from last year, the program exceeded the performance goal for Indicator 2.1.1.2 of facilitating 13,000 therapeutic encounters.

The decrease in number of service members served can be partially attributed to a shift towards more longitudinal care in VA and DoD partner sites. Military and veteran healthcare systems continue to adjust to shifting demands in their efforts to respond to the needs of active duty and veteran populations impacted by war-related trauma. In the past, these systems were attempting to manage incoming waves of new patients. Now, with fewer new patients coming off battle fields, focus has been shifting towards more longitudinal care, including for non-battle related traumatic brain injuries (automobile and training accidents, etc.).

An example of this shift is reflected in how demand for services across the DoD/Defense Intrepid Network for TBI and Brain Health is moving from Intensive Outpatient Programming, where patients are seen for a 3–5-week period only, to Longitudinal Outpatient Programming, in which a patient may be followed for 8-12 weeks or even longer. While the shift to longitudinal Outpatient Programming has resulted in fewer total patients served, demand for longitudinal program services continues to be high, as reflected in the increased number of total encounters delivered.

Recent staffing changes within the Creative Forces program have also impacted the above indicators. This year, an NEA-supported Dance Movement Therapist transitioned to a GS/DoD-supported position. This therapist's program delivery involves serving higher numbers of one-time patients than the average Creative Arts Therapist (CAT) in the network. As this therapist is no longer NEA-supported, the agency cannot include data from these encounters in this report. This results in fewer reported patients served than expected, seen in the above table for Indicator 2.1.1.1. While Creative Forces leadership encourages the DoD to backfill support for the CATs NEA-support embeds in these programs, the transitions can lead to losses of data such as this.

Another example of how program growth can cause unintended impacts is in anticipated changes to FY 2025 program delivery. A recent Memorandum of Agreement expands the number of DoD partners in the Creative Forces Network from 7 to 12. During this period of expansion, the Creative Forces team will be applying more focus on capacity-building support for new sites. While the NEA-supported team will be working toward program goals, they will not be generating new patient or patient encounter data. Instead, NEA-supported positions will be assisting DoD-supported CATs with training, supplies, recruiting and peer-to-peer support.

Considering these developments, the NEA will review the associated indicators with program staff to ensure data collected and measures are a true reflection of performance and have a clear relationship to the mission and strategic objectives of the agency. Additionally, the clinical team is restructuring data collection efforts to better monitor ongoing shifts in real time, allowing for more timely response, where and when appropriate. The team will be monitoring monthly performance and reviewing progress quarterly.

Apart from Creative Forces, through direct grants, 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 2.1.2:

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.

Indicator	Type	FY 2024 Target	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024
2.1.2.1. 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>	<i>Perf.</i>	<i>113</i>	<i>Baseline Data Not Available</i>	<i>Baseline Data Not Available</i>	<i>Baseline Data Not Available</i>	112	229

A large portion of the NEA’s direct work in arts and health is through the Office of Research & Analysis (ORA). Based on agency-wide and external feedback, ORA developed its own five-year agenda, which guides the agency’s priorities in research. One such priority is investigating the arts’ impacts on health. Through its granting programs, ORA invites and supports experimental and quasi-experimental research proposals that aim to test causal relationships between the arts and various outcome areas in health and human development.

Beyond grant funding opportunities, NEA staff routinely participate in and support a variety of activities that engage practitioners, researchers, and policy-makers with the integration of the arts in advancing individual health and well-being. Over the fiscal year, ORA and other NEA staff participated in and presented at a variety of meetings, conferences and symposiums in this content area. For example, ORA was represented at “Music & Mind”, an event focused on the impact of music on the brain at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, and at the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies Creative Aging Institute, where staff moderated a panel about arts strategies to combat social isolation in older populations. The office also produces resources on arts and health for public use, such as easily digestible blog posts, i.e., “[Momentum Gains with Small-Scale Studies about the Arts and Mental Health.](#)”

Over FY 2024, 229 NEA-supported convenings, products, and technical assistance opportunities were made available to practitioners, researchers, and policy-makers seeking to advance individual health and well-being through the arts. This measure is reported above, under Indicator 2.1.2.1, and exceeded the performance target of 113 opportunities. Like Indicator 1.3.2.1, information on NEA-supported resource activities was not collected prior to FY 2023, meaning data for earlier years is unavailable.

In FY 2024, the NEA also focused on arts and health initiatives in new ways. On January 30, 2024, the White House Domestic Policy Council and the NEA co-hosted [Healing, Bridging, Thriving: A Summit on Arts and Culture in our Communities](#), a first-of-its-kind convening to share insights and explore opportunities for arts organizations and artists to contribute to the health and well-being of individuals and communities, invigorate physical spaces, fuel democracy, and foster equitable outcomes. The summit featured panels, performances, and discussions about vital topics ensuring that the arts and their benefits are accessible to all. The agency continues to steward the conversation around arts and health, for example through a [blog series](#) offering reflections from diverse perspectives represented at the event. The series features government officials, policymakers, artists, advocates, academics, and arts leaders, as they share what ideas and inspiration they took from the experience, and how they’re working to advance a broader understanding of how arts and culture can contribute to other fields and unlock new opportunities for artists.

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 encourages 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 public-private 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.

Indicator	Type	FY 2024 Target	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024
2.2.1.1. 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>	<i>Perf.</i>	79	58	69	59	85	92

One way the NEA monitors progress toward this goal is by tracking the number of communities where organizations are awarded funds for projects that embed the arts in system-wide initiatives that seek to strengthen or heal communities. Such awards include projects focused on systems change, including through the Our Town and Collective Impact programs, projects that protect and revitalize natural, cultural, and economic resources, and projects that respond to disasters or emergencies. In FY 2024, the agency saw more awarded projects meeting this goal than in years past, with organizations in 92 unique communities receiving such awards, reported in the above table for Indicator 2.2.1.1. The increase since 2022 may be partially due to slight changes in definitions for this goal between the previous and current strategic plan, as shown in [Table 3](#). Over the strategic plan period (FY 2022-2026), the agency has supported awards in 177 communities.

Performance Goal 2.2.2:

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

Indicator	Type	FY 2024 Target	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024
2.2.2.1. 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>	<i>Perf.</i>	95	<i>Baseline Data Not Available</i>	<i>Baseline Data Not Available</i>	<i>Baseline Data Not Available</i>	94	197

The NEA strives to strengthen the integration of the arts in system-wide initiatives beyond grant funding opportunities. For example, starting in 2024, the NEA convened a new [Interagency Working Group on Arts, Health, and Civic Infrastructure](#) (IWG-AHCI). Chaired by Maria Rosario Jackson, chair of the NEA, and Xavier Becerra, secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), this group will foster exchanges of insights and information about arts and cultural resources and strategies across federal agencies, with the goal of helping to improve the health and well-being of individuals and communities.

This working group meets quarterly and builds from previous cross-agency efforts to more fully integrate arts and cultural perspectives with public policy interventions. Recent examples include the [Federal Interagency Task Force on the Arts and Human Development](#), the Sound Health initiative, and NEA partnerships with the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) and the CDC Foundation. In addition, arts-based approaches are recommended throughout the [Equitable Long Term Recovery and Resilience \(ELTRR\) Plan](#), an HHS-led initiative spanning multiple agencies and departments.

Beyond work at the interagency level, NEA staff routinely participate in and support a variety of activities that engage practitioners, researchers, and policy-makers with the integration of the arts in efforts to heal and bolster communities. For example, the Our Town initiative offers many opportunities for the sector such as technical assistance office hours, tailored workshops about creative placemaking basics, and small group sessions for specific populations such as those looking to work in rural communities. Further, staff in the NEA’s Arts Education division hold quarterly meetings with state partners seeking to embed the arts in state-wide education systems. In one such event, NEA’s Our Town team held a webinar diving deeper into the ways that arts and culture strengthen individuals and communities through research and real-world examples. [The Healing, Bridging, Thriving: Reflections on Arts and Culture in Healthy Communities](#) webinar in May 2024, brought together artists, designers, culture bearers, community members,

and government to come together to advance local goals, to recognize opportunities where the arts can make a difference, and to consider the well-being of the community as a whole.

Over FY 2024, 197 NEA-supported convenings, products, and technical assistance opportunities were made available to practitioners, researchers, and policy-makers seeking to integrate the arts with system-wide initiatives to strengthen and heal communities. This measure is reported under Indicator 2.2.2.1 in the table above and exceeded the performance target of 95 opportunities. Like Indicator 1.3.2.1 and 2.1.2.1, information on NEA-supported resource activities was not collected prior to FY 2023, meaning data for earlier years is unavailable.

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 launched 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 the Deputy Chair for Programs & Partnerships

Although the NEA is primarily a grantmaking agency, it 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 than may 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 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).

Performance Goal 3.1.1:

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

Indicator	Type	FY 2024 Target	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024
3.1.1.1. Number of grantees reporting that NEA funding enabled them to build the capacity to manage more effective organizations and agencies. <i>Source: FDR</i>	<i>Perf.</i>	<i>Baseline data not available</i>	<i>Baseline data not available</i>	<i>Baseline data not available</i>	<i>Baseline data not available</i>	<i>Data not available</i>	<i>Data not available</i>
3.1.1.2. Percent of participants expressing satisfaction with the quality and value of services provided through NEA-supported leadership training and technical assistance initiatives. <i>Source: Feedback Forms</i>	<i>Perf.</i>	<i>Baseline data not available</i>	<i>Baseline data not available</i>	<i>Baseline data not available</i>	<i>Baseline data not available</i>	<i>Baseline data not available</i>	<i>Data not available</i>

To help fulfill such needs, the NEA supports a variety of projects and initiatives including peer-to-peer learning groups and workshops for arts administrators. Over the strategic plan period, the NEA has awarded funding to projects supporting the development of skills and strategies that will enable arts leaders to manage more effective organizations and agencies. Grant projects meeting this goal include a variety of project types such as conferences, professional development training, artist residencies, and workshop series. For example, in FY 2024, the NEA funded the Traditional Cowboy Arts Association in Salmon, Idaho, to support an artist fellowship program. Participating craft artists will develop skills in bit and spur making, silversmithing, saddle making, or rawhide braiding with master artisans, preserving the trade for future generations. Other grant projects meeting this goal include subgranting programs through Local Arts Agencies. Also in FY 2024, the NEA funded Asheville Area Arts Council to support the Grassroots Arts Program, an initiative providing subgrants to nonprofit arts organizations in Buncombe County, North Carolina.

Like with Indicator 1.4.1.2, the FY 2022-2026 Strategic Plan resulted in the creation of a new goal for funded projects, this one relating to capacity building.²⁵ FY 2023 marks the first year in which awards were coded as meeting this goal, and data are unavailable for FY 2020 through FY 2022.

As of this report, the NEA has only received FDRs from 43% of FY 2023 and 2% of FY 2024 grantees with capacity building projects. As such, the NEA is not able to report on this indicator,

²⁵ For more information on goals and outcomes, see [Differences in Strategic Goals](#)

as seen in the table above. It is anticipated that the FY 2025 report will include the first report for this indicator, establishing a baseline.

Beyond grantmaking, the NEA also provides capacity-building opportunities for the public via webinars, convenings, and published resources. In alignment with this strategic goal, the NEA is developing a protocol to collect feedback from those who participate in training and technical assistance events. The NEA will report data for this indicator starting in FY 2025 under Indicator 3.1.1.2.

While the NEA does not currently survey all event participants, the agency does collect feedback on specific webinars, convenings, and resources. For example, the NEA hosted the 2024 Research Labs Summit in June 2024. NEA Research Labs is a funding program supporting transdisciplinary research teams, grounded in the social and behavioral sciences, to engage with the NEA's [five-year research agenda](#) and yield empirical insights about the arts for the benefit of arts and non-arts sectors alike. This two-day summit included in-person panel discussions, such as [“Meet the Authors”](#), a session where four Lab investigators spoke about books they have produced with support from the agency’s research awards program.

The NEA’s ORA surveyed participants after the event, to gain insight into the impact of the event on those who attended. Of respondents, 100% either agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements, “My participation in this Summit was worth my time”, “The topics covered in the Summit were relevant to my work,”, and “I made new connections with people in other fields than my own at the Summit.” Similarly, 86% of respondents were either satisfied or very satisfied with session offerings at the Summit. Feedback from surveys such as this provide the basis for the NEA’s overall event feedback survey which will be deployed in FY 2025.

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 constantly 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 (OPA) 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.

Indicator	Type	FY 2024 Target	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024
3.2.1.1. 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>	<i>Perf.</i>	<i>100%</i>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
3.2.1.2. Percent of states and U.S. jurisdictions whose residents interact with the NEA through the agency’s website. <i>Source: Google Analytics data</i>	<i>Perf.</i>	<i>100%</i>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

To determine the NEA’s reach to the American people, OPA reviews the number of newspapers and magazines in which NEA-related articles appear. OPA can also review the number of followers on social media channels, and how often people engage with specific material featured on them. OPA looks at how many people visit the NEA website, in what states they are located, what pages they go to, and how much time they spend on them. Further, OPA examines the number of publications ordered as well as how many times publication pages are accessed on the website. Together, these numbers give a general idea of the reach the NEA has to promote the arts and engage with American communities.

In FY 2020 through FY 2024, NEA-related articles appeared in news outlets in all U.S. states and jurisdictions, including the District of Columbia. Likewise, individuals living in all U.S. states and jurisdictions interacted with the NEA through its website. Both measures are reported in the table above, for Indicators 3.2.1.1 and 3.2.1.2, respectively.

Performance Goal 3.2.2:

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.

Indicator	Type	FY 2024 Target	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024
3.2.2.1. Percent of NEA website users who express satisfaction with the value of research information and publications available there. <i>Source: Pop-up survey</i>	<i>Perf.</i>	<i>Baseline data not available</i>	<i>Baseline data not available</i>	<i>Baseline data not available</i>	<i>Baseline data not available</i>	<i>Baseline data not available</i>	<i>Data Not Available</i>
3.2.2.2. Mean citation rate for projects resulting from NEA awards for research. <i>Source: Bibliometric research</i>	<i>Perf.</i>	2.40	1.09	2.48	1.50	2.04	1.89

To advance research in the arts, the NEA needs to look beyond standard media platforms to evaluate progress. In alignment with this strategic goal, the NEA had planned to deploy a pop-up satisfaction survey on the NEA website. When developing the survey, agency staff noted that research information and insights are available throughout the website, not limited to posted research publications. For example, infographics and statistics are shared in news releases, blog posts, and other content. Surveying only users of publications would not accurately report the indicator as written. As such, the NEA has removed Indicator 3.2.2.1 from the agency’s performance plan starting in FY 2025, and reports “data not available” for all FYs reported in the above table.

In lieu of measuring satisfaction through a feedback survey, the NEA can measure the ways in which the public interact with research information and publications on the agency’s website. Over FY 2024, research pages online received 64,219 webpage views with 28,704 unique page visitors. Additionally, research-related publications received a total of 27,626 downloads during FY 2024 – showing the public’s interest in NEA research information and publications.

Additionally, in FY 2024, ORA undertook a study exploring how the agency's published resources can better serve teaching and research in higher education. The specific study focus was on faculty in arts administration, arts management, arts entrepreneurship, cultural management, and cultural policy programs in the United States. To achieve this purpose, one primary objective of the study was to review whether and how current NEA published resources are useful, relevant, and aligned to academic work and priorities. First, the team identified 518 available NEA resources including blog posts, online articles, reports, audio records, and books. From this desk research, along with expert interviews and an online survey to active teachers and scholars, the study team concluded that the NEA website is considered a top source for authoritative resources by arts management academics, especially for teaching. However,

awareness of specific NEA resources beyond research reports is mixed. The study offered recommendations for making resources more discoverable, better organized, and more closely aligned with field needs. ORA is reviewing recommendations for actionable items to implement in the coming fiscal years.

Currently, the NEA does track other metrics to provide insight on progress toward advancing research in the arts. ORA tracks the number of papers published by NEA-funded research award grantees, as well as the number of citations received for each publication. The FY 2023 APR included the first report of this indicator, at which time, data for previous years was unavailable. For FY 2024, ORA has calculated citation rates for all included years of interest. As such, the published performance target was developed prior to the availability of data. The FY 2025 Performance Plan will include a target based on the demonstrated baseline.

In FY 2024, research award grantees produced 27 publications, an on par with FY 2023 (27 publications). Similarly, the number of citations received by all research award grantees (FY 2012 – 2024) increased from 359 citations in FY 2023 to 383 citations in FY 2024. NEA-supported research publications currently hold a citation rate of approximately 1.89 citations per publication, seen in the above table for Indicator 3.2.2.2. The decrease in citation rate is partially due to the differences in growth rates between publications produced and citations received, as well as the projects funded. For example, some types of research, such as randomized control trials, may produce many publications, compared to an ethnographic case study that may produce only one. As evident in the table above, the citation rate for these grantees has fluctuated since FY 2020, ranging from 1.09 to 2.48, because of these factors. The 1.89 citation rate seen in FY 2024 remains within the established range.

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

Film & 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, a trend that has continued in post-pandemic years.

Performance Goal 3.3.1:

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.

Indicator	Type	FY 2024 Target	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024
3.3.1.1. Number of grantees reporting that NEA funding enabled them to build the capacity to serve for serving a broader public through digital or emergent technology. <i>Source: FDR</i>	<i>Perf.</i>	<i>Baseline data not available</i>	<i>Baseline data not available</i>	<i>Baseline data not available</i>	<i>Baseline data not available</i>	<i>Data not available</i>	<i>Data not available</i>
3.3.1.2. Number of grantees reporting that NEA funding enabled them to build the capacity to support tech-centered creative practices. <i>Source: FDR</i>	<i>Perf.</i>	<i>Baseline data not available</i>	<i>Baseline data not available</i>	<i>Baseline data not available</i>	<i>Baseline data not available</i>	<i>Data not available</i>	<i>Data not available</i>

As outlined in the FY 2022-2026 Strategic Plan, the goal of investing in organizational capacity in relation to technology is two-fold. Grantees with awards coded for this strategic goal met either criterion—building capacity to serve a broader public through digital or emergent technology or building capacity to support tech-centered creative practices.

Like with Indicator 1.4.1.2 and 3.1.1.1, the strategic plan resulted in the creation of a new goal for funded projects, this one relating to arts and technology.²⁶ FY 2023 marks the first year in which awards were coded as meeting this goal, and data are unavailable for FY 2020 through FY 2022.

Again, similar to Indicator 3.1.1.1, the NEA has only received FDRs from 36% of FY 2023 and 0% of FY 2024 grantees with technology-focused projects. Therefore, the NEA is unable to report on Indicator 3.3.1.1 and 3.3.1.2. The NEA anticipates reporting these performance goals beginning in FY 2025.

²⁶ For more information on goals and outcomes, see [Differences in Strategic Goals](#)

Strategic Goal 4

Pursue and adopt exemplary practices to support the agency's mission.

The NEA is a small, independent federal agency with a big impact and is committed to effectively carrying out its mission. The NEA is a responsible steward of its resources, building a workforce that is committed to its mission and service to the American people, and using resources such as technology strategically.

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

Bearing in mind the NEA's accountability to U.S. taxpayers, and to facilitate its mission, the NEA's staff engage in work practices and 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 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	Type	FY 2024 Target	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024
4.1.1.1. Annual receipt of an unmodified audit opinion. <i>Source: Administrative records</i>	<i>Perf.</i>	<i>Unmodified</i>	Unmodified	Unmodified	Unmodified	Unmodified	Unmodified
4.1.1.2. 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>	<i>Perf.</i>	<i>Certified</i>	Certified	Certified	Certified	Certified	<i>Data Not Available</i>
4.1.1.3. 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>	<i>Perf.</i>	<i>Baseline data not available</i>	<i>Baseline data not available</i>	<i>Baseline data not available</i>	<i>Baseline data not available</i>	80% Compliance	100% Compliance

The NEA remains a vigilant steward of funds through accountable, transparent, and effective operations. In FY 2024, the NEA received an unmodified audit opinion for Indicator 4.1.1.1, following the trend of previous years. The NEA currently undergoes Data Act reviews every other year, and as such, the agency is unable to report Indicator 4.1.1.2 for FY 2024. The most recent review occurred in FY 2023, finding that the data and deliverables submitted to USASpending.gov and other federal systems were certified as accurate, complete, and in accordance with government-wide data standards, shown in the above table for Indicator 4.1.1.2.

The FY 2024 performance plan also outlined improvements to the agency’s cybersecurity posture through the development and implementation of a zero-trust architecture and by upgrading infrastructure in alignment with the multi-year IPV6 migration plan. The Office of Information and Technology Management (OITM) uses CISA’s Zero Trust Maturity Model v2to benchmark its progress in the implementation of the NEA’s Zero Trust Architecture. CISA’s Zero Trust Maturity Model v2 rates the technical implementation of Zero Trust functions in four levels from the lowest to the highest being: Traditional, Initial, Advanced, and Optimal. OITM has performed an analysis of its Zero Trust Architecture implementation against CISA’s Zero Trust Maturity Model v2 and has reached the notable level of 92% technically implemented at the levels of Advanced or Optimal.

Additionally, OITM is well ahead of its objective for IPv4 to IPv6 transition. The agency is at 100% IPv4and IPv6 operational compliance putting the NEA two years ahead of the Office of Management and Budget’s required transition schedule of 50% compliant by the end of FY 2024. This is seen in the above table, reported under Indicator 4.1.1.3. The agency reports “baseline data unavailable” for previous years, as the agency did not track progress towards this goal until FY 2023.

Performance Goal 4.1.2:

The NEA recruits and engages citizens as panelists who reflect the nation’s geographic and racial/ethnic diversity.

Indicators	Type	FY 2024 Target	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024
4.1.2.1. Percent of U.S. states, including the District of Columbia, represented by individuals serving on NEA panels. <i>Source: Administrative data</i>	<i>Perf.</i>	<i>100%</i>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
4.1.2.2. Percent of U.S. territories represented by individuals serving on NEA panels. <i>Source: Administrative data</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Target Not Required</i>	20.00%	20.00%	40.00%	40.00%	40.00%
4.1.2.3. Percent of NEA panelists that express satisfaction with their participation in the panel process. <i>Source: Panelist survey</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Target Not Required</i>	<i>Baseline Data Not Available</i>	<i>Baseline Data Not Available</i>	<i>Baseline Data Not Available</i>	96.00%	99.58%

The NEA recruits and engages citizens as panelists from each state and the District of Columbia each year, including in FY 2024. The percentage of states, including the District of Columbia, who are represented by individuals serving on NEA panels each fiscal year is shown in the table above for Indicator 4.1.2.1. In Indicator 4.1.2.2, the NEA is reporting on the percent of non-continental United States territories represented by individuals serving on NEA panels as well. The non-continental United States territories include: American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. In FY 2024, two territories were represented by individuals serving on NEA panels, with representation from Puerto Rico and Guam. The start of the strategic plan period in FY 2022, marked an increase for this indicator, showing the agency's work in diverse outreach and panelist recruitment. While participation on panels by individuals living in non-continental territories can be challenging due to time zone differences, the NEA is working to further increase the number of territories represented on panels.

The panelists also have an opportunity to share feedback on their experience via a survey at the completion of their service. Starting in FY 2023, the NEA began to use a measure of satisfaction from this survey to track progress toward this performance goal. In FY 2024, of the 239 respondents, 238 or 99.58% of panelists reported being "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with their participation in the panel process, as demonstrated in the above table under Indicator 4.1.2.4. This is an increase from FY 2023.

As previously mentioned, the FY 2022-FY 2026 Strategic Plan resulted in the development of performance indicators based on new data collections. Prior to this strategic plan, the agency did not measure panelist satisfaction across all programs. As such activities are managed by a variety of staff, implementation required the addition of a uniform question into multiple panelist feedback surveys. Since panels for FY 2022 awards were already complete when the current plan was enacted, the agency implemented this survey question starting with FY 2023 panels, making data unavailable for previous years.

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.

Performance Goal 4.2.1:

NEA employees report a positive work culture and a high degree of satisfaction working at the NEA.

Indicators	Type	FY 2024 Target	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024
4.2.1.1. Employee Engagement Index Score on OPM’s annual Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey. <i>Source: FEVS</i>	<i>Perf.</i>	76%	75%	78%	78%	74%	72%
4.2.1.2. Intrinsic Work Experience Score on OPM’s annual Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey. <i>Source: FEVS</i>	<i>Perf.</i>	85%	83%	79%	81%	79%	80%

The Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) is administered each year in part to assess employee satisfaction with their workplace experience. Specifically, the Employee Engagement Index (EEI) assesses the critical conditions conducive for employee engagement. The index score is the average of positive responses to 15 FEVS questions divided into three sub-indexes: Leaders Lead, Supervisors, and Intrinsic Work Experience. This index is meant to evaluate an employee’s sense of purpose evident in their display of dedication, persistence, and effort in their work or overall attachment to their organization and its mission. In FY 2024, the NEA had an Employee Engagement Index score of 72%, continuing a downturn compared to previous years as shown in the table above for Indicator 4.2.1.1. NEA leadership is planning a new measure of organizational health to monitor employee engagement and prevent further downturns. The agency’s Culture of Work internal task force is currently exploring methods of defining and measuring organizational health in relation to employee engagement. A new organizational health measure will more frequently assess employee engagement and satisfaction, enabling agency management to proactively address staff issues.

The NEA takes an additional look at one of the Employee Engagement sub-indexes: Intrinsic Work Experience. This index captures employee feelings of motivation and competency relating to their role in the workplace. The index includes responses to questions such as “My work gives me a feeling of personal accomplishment” and “I feel encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things.” As shown in the table above, the NEA has received scores ranging from 79% to 83% from FY 2020-FY 2024. The FY 2024 score, 80%, remains in that range, as demonstrated in the table above, but does not meet the performance target of 85%.

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 Civil Rights and Equal Employment Opportunity

In its founding legislation, the NEA was charged with the responsibility of widening the availability of art, 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 everyone in the United States.

The NEA continues to make progress in lifting barriers to arts participation across the nation. Most recently, an analysis showed that roughly 33 percent of organizations receiving NEA grants are 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.

Performance Goal CCO 1.1

The NEA supports projects and partnerships that engage populations reflecting the nation’s demographic, geographic, and socioeconomic diversity.

Indicator	Type	FY 2024 Target	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024
CCO 1.1.1. Percent of NEA awards supporting projects that engaged diverse demographic groups. <i>Source: FDR</i>	<i>Perf.</i>	23.50%	64.33%	68.91%	70.69%	71.15%	<i>Data Not Available</i>
CCO 1.1.2. Percent of subawards, through Partnership Agreements, supporting project activities that engaged diverse demographic groups. <i>Source: SAA/RAO FDR, Census ACS data</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Target Not Required</i>	13.96%	23.27%	26.25%	<i>Data not available</i>	<i>Data not available</i>
CCO 1.1.3. Percent of NEA awards that supported project activities in rural areas or high-poverty neighborhoods. <i>Source: FDR</i>	<i>Perf.</i>	35.00%	52.96%	58.12%	61.09%	60.65%	<i>Data Not Available</i>
CCO 1.1.4. Percent of subawards that supported project activities in rural areas or high-poverty neighborhoods. <i>Source: SAA/RAO FDR, Census ACS data</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Target Not Required</i>	16.21%	27.21%	30.50%	<i>Data not available</i>	<i>Data Not Available</i>

The agency monitors the distribution of grants in support of widening its reach among diverse demographic, geographic, and socioeconomic groups. For example, as shown above, from FY 2020 to FY 2024, a range of 64.33% to 71.15% of direct grant awards and 13.96% to 26.25% of subawards supported projects that engaged diverse demographic groups²⁷, shown in the above table under Indicator CCO 1.1.1. Supported projects with at least one project activity in one or more of the following categories met the criteria for engaging diverse demographic groups: a Census tract with a predominant non-white population and/or a Census tract with at least 20% of the population living below the poverty line. In FY 2024, the NEA exceeded the performance goal of 23.50% of direct awards engaging diverse demographic groups.

Additionally, from FY 2020 to FY 2024, a range of 52.96% to 61.09% of direct grant awards and 16.21% to 30.50% of subawards supported projects in rural areas or high-poverty

²⁷ A definition for diverse demographic groups in this indicator can also be found in [Table 2](#).

neighborhoods²⁸. Supported projects with at least one project activity outside a metropolitan statistical area and/or a Census tract with at least 20% of the population living below the poverty line were included in this analysis. In FY 2024, the NEA exceeded the performance goal of 35% of direct awards with activities in rural areas or high-poverty neighborhoods, reported under Indicator CCO 1.1.3.

Performance Goal CCO 1.2

The NEA will establish a model EEO program based on development of internal benchmarks.

Indicator	Type	FY 2024 Target	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024
CCO 1.2.1. Completion of six essential elements for a model EEO program as described in MD-715.5 Source: <i>Administrative records</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Target Not Required</i>	Complete	Complete	Complete	Complete	Complete

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. Since FY 2020, the agency has maintained a fully staffed EEO office. As shown above, the agency has completed the six essential elements for a model EEO program for all years from FY 2020-FY 2024, as shown in the above table under Indicator CCO 1.2.1.

²⁸ A definition for rural and high-poverty areas in this indicator can also be found in [Table 2](#).

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 was conducted from FY 2022 to FY 2024 to harvest findings from the agency's ARP grantmaking and to inform the NEA's traditional grantmaking practices. In FY 2024, the three final studies were completed: a study documenting the planning and implementation of ARP grant opportunities, and lessons learned by NEA staff; a study of the experiences of new grantees with the ARP grant management and reporting process; and an ARP Learning Memo discussing the impact of the previous ARP study findings. Senior leadership reviewed study findings and recommendations and discussed how findings would be applied to improve agency operations. For example, the NEA's Office of Grants Management adopted a study recommendation to assess the risk level of new grantees in order to proactively provide technical assistance.

National HBCU Study. In FY 2023, 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 underway and 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. An external summative evaluation of the Music Therapy Longitudinal Outpatient Program began in FY 2023 and is underway. 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), Richard L. Roudebush Veterans' Administration Medical Center Community Liaison Demonstration Project, and the Joint Base Lewis McChord (JBLM) Family Art Therapy Program.

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. This study was completed in FY 2024 and provided the foundation and preliminary feasibility data for a large scale randomized controlled trial on a stepped-care model for chronic pain using music listening and music imagery. This follow-on study, also funded by the NEA’s Creative Forces, “Stepped-Care Intervention of Music and Imagery to Assess Relief (SCIMITAR) Trial,” is now underway.

Evaluation of Creative Forces’ Community Arts Engagement Program. The NEA Office of Research & Analysis has begun an outcome evaluation of the Community Arts Engagement Program. As part of this evaluation, the NEA will measure participant-level outcomes associated with participation in arts programming provided by Community Arts Engagement 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. This pilot study informed planning of the FY 2025 evaluation. A contract award for this study was made at the end of FY 2024; the study is underway and expected to conclude no later than FY 2027.

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, and documented important lessons learned during the NFN’s first two years. In FY 2024, a new evaluator was contracted to complete the developmental evaluation, design and conduct an implementation evaluation of the programs and activities of the initiative, and ultimately design an outcome evaluation to be conducted in future years. A contract award for this study was made at the end of FY 2024; the study is underway and expected to conclude in FY 2025.

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. In FY 2024, the NEA conducted 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. Surveying NEA Research awardees from FY 2012 to FY 2016, the study found that most awardees reported that their NEA research award had strong positive outcomes on their funded projects and their careers, and that their NEA research grant resulted in significant contributions to knowledge or practice in either the arts or other sectors.

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 2024 was “Leisure engagement in older age is related to objective and subjective experiences of aging,” published in *Nature Communication*, the result of work under an NEA Research Labs award. Another NEA-funded research project yielded, “Do Declining Enrollments Predict Teacher Turnover in Music?,” published in the *Journal of Research in Music Education*.

Secondary Dataset Analyses. In FY 2024, the NEA released three reports based on nationally representative data on arts participation trends in 2022. These reports included *Arts Participation Patterns in 2022: Highlights from the Survey of Public Participation in the Arts*, and a report with an interactive state-level analysis, *50 States of Arts Participation: 2022 – A geographical analysis of results from the Survey of Public Participation in the Arts*. Together with a third publication, *Online Audiences for Arts Programming: A Survey of Virtual Participation Amid COVID-19*, which examined data from the Arts Module of the 2022 General Social Survey, these reports 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. The agency also released results from an extensive demographic and geographic analysis of arts participation rates, *Arts Attendance, Art-Making, and Social Connectedness: Spring/Summer 2024*, which investigated correlations between artistic and civic engagement using data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s Household Pulse Survey. The agency has begun work on the *2022 SPPA Comprehensive Report*, to be released in FY 2025, which will provide details on arts attendance, creation, and learning activities and frequencies, a geographic analysis of arts engagement by region and metro areas, as well as a trend analysis of arts participation from 2002-2022.

In FY 2024, the NEA published *Curtains Up: Critical Factors Influencing Theater Resiliency*, a literature scan that examines the current challenges facing U.S. theaters and identifies strategies and tactics that theaters adopted to survive the COVID-19 pandemic and its fallout. During this fiscal year, the agency also held a series of listening sessions with members of the nonprofit theater ecosystem about recent challenges, potential strategies, and successful innovations within the nonprofit theater sector. A report based on a qualitative analysis of these listening sessions is expected in FY 2025. In FY 2025, the agency is also expected to publish 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. In FY 2023, the NEA launched a mixed-methods study to investigate the relationship 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 preview of the study’s interim findings and follow-up study was presented at a session at the 2024 Grantmakers in the Arts Conference. 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, in FY 2024 the NEA drafted new metrics involving more frequent assessments of organizational health. The NEA will continue to refine the new metrics and begin implementation in FY 2025.

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.

The Equity Action Plan measurement framework was implemented in the third quarter of FY 2024, with the first implementation reports collected in July 2024. The first reports covered activities from the enactment of the plan in 2022 through June 2024, and were analyzed by ORA to produce a summary of findings report. The Equity Action Plan leadership team held a learning session with office leads to review data submitted in reports and lessons learned from the first two years of the plan.

ArtsHERE Program Evaluation. [ArtsHERE](#), the NEA's pilot equity initiative, is central to the agency's Equity Action Plan. The initiative supports 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 South Arts, a Regional Arts Organization (RAO), to undertake ArtsHERE; the Wallace Foundation provided South Arts with matching funds to support this initiative.

During FY 2023, for the first phase of the evaluation, 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. In FY 2024, for the second phase of the evaluation, the NEA engaged a second evaluation contractor to implement the monitoring and evaluation components of the MEL plan; the first contractor will continue to implement the learning component. 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 documented and assessed developments that have occurred at this intersection since the 2016 convening. The study identified 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 inform future grant guideline updates and accessibility initiatives of the agency. The study concluded in early FY 2025.