

Established by Congress in 1965, the National Endowment for the Arts is the independent federal agency whose funding and support gives Americans the opportunity to participate in the arts, exercise their imaginations, and develop their creative capacities. Through partnerships with state arts agencies, local leaders, other federal agencies, and the philanthropic sector, the Arts Endowment supports arts learning, affirms and celebrates America's rich and diverse cultural heritage, and extends its work to promote equal access to the arts in every community across America.

The National Endowment for the Arts is the only funder, public or private, to support the arts in all 50 states, U.S. territories, and the District of Columbia. The agency awards more than \$120 million annually with each grant dollar matched by up to nine dollars from other funding sources.

Economic Impact of the Arts

The arts generate more money to local and state economies than several other industries. According to data released by the National Endowment for the Arts and the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, the arts and cultural industries contributed \$804.2 billion to the U.S. economy in 2016, more than agriculture or transportation, and employed 5 million.

FUNDING THROUGH THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS LITERATURE PROGRAM:

Direct grants to nonprofit organizations, 1966-2018:

\$124.8 million

Fellowships to individual writers, 1967-2018:

\$47.8 million

Total for Literature in 2018 (including organizations, creative writers, and translators):

\$4.8 million

2018 FUNDING EXAMPLES IN ART WORKS

Assisting nonprofit publishers: **Center for Literary Publishing in Fort Collins, Colorado**, to support publication of the literary journal *Colorado Review* and a new book through the Mountain West Poetry Series. A teaching press, the center involves student interns in every stage of the publishing process.

Extending the arts to underserved populations: **Minnesota Prison Writing Workshop in St. Paul, Minnesota**, to support creative writing workshops for incarcerated individuals, with classes designed to encourage artistic growth and foster a literary community and culture of mentorship.

Providing learning opportunities for writers of all levels: **Fishtrap in Enterprise, Oregon**, to support a week-long conference for youth and adults featuring writing workshops, readings, talks, and panel discussions.

Supporting literary programming: **Gemini Ink in San Antonio, Texas**, to support serving San Antonio writers and readers, and offering regular creative writing and literature workshops as well as free public readings.



CREATIVE WRITING FELLOWSHIPS

Fellowships of \$25,000 are awarded in alternating years in prose (fiction and creative nonfiction) and poetry, giving recipients the time and space to create, revise, conduct research, and connect with readers. The program is arguably the most egalitarian grant program in its field: applications are free and open to the public; fellows are selected through an anonymous review process in which the sole criterion is artistic excellence; and the judging panel is diverse and varies year to year.

Since 1990, 102 of the 176 American recipients of the National Book Award, National Book Critics Circle Award, and Pulitzer Prize in Poetry and Fiction were recipients of NEA Fellowships earlier in their careers. For 2018, 36 fellows were selected from 1,692 prose applicants.

LITERARY TRANSLATION FELLOWSHIPS

Fellowships of \$12,500 or \$25,000 are awarded to literary translators, giving recipients the time and space to create English renditions of the world's best literature, making them accessible to American audiences.

Since 1981, the NEA has awarded 455 fellowships to 404 literary translators, with translations representing 69 languages and 82 countries. Among the 22 projects funded in 2018 are works from 15 languages and five continents. Ten are by female authors.

INITIATIVES AND PARTNERSHIPS

The **NEA Big Read** offers grants to support innovative community reading programs designed around a title in the NEA Big Read library. Since 2006, more than 4.8 million Americans have attended an NEA Big Read event. In 2018, 79 grants were awarded totaling more than \$1 million.

Poetry Out Loud engages high school students in every state, Washington, D.C., the US Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico in the public recitation of poetry, building students' self-confidence and encouraging a lasting love of poetry. The program features free educational materials and a dynamic national recitation competition. More than 300,000 students participate in the program each year.

The **Poetry and Prose Stage at the National Book Festival** in Washington, D.C. has been hosted by the National Endowment for the Arts since 2001. The lineup for 2018 included Natalie Diaz, Camille Dungy, Robert Hass, Patricia Lockwood, James McBride, Lorrie Moore, Patrick Rosal, Richard Russo, and Tracy K. Smith.

RESEARCH

U.S. Trends in Arts Attendance and Literary Reading: 2002-2017 (2018) reports on data from the 2017 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts, a partnership of the National Endowment for the Arts with the U.S. Census Bureau. The report notes that between 2012 and 2017, the rate of poetry reading among adults grew by an extraordinary 76 percent, to 28 million people and the share of 18-24-year-olds who read poetry more than doubled.

RESOURCES

The Art of Empathy: Celebrating Literature in Translation (2014) is an anthology of essays by award-winning translators and publishers on translation's ability to help us understand other cultures, available in print and online at [arts.gov/publications/art-empathy-celebrating-literature-translation](https://www.arts.gov/publications/art-empathy-celebrating-literature-translation).

List of NEA Literature Fellows includes bios, artist statements, and writing excerpts from a sample of fellows (2001 – present) at [arts.gov/literature-fellowships-list/by-year/all](https://www.arts.gov/literature-fellowships-list/by-year/all).

The Arts Endowment produces a weekly podcast that features many writers including Emily St. John Mandel, author of *Station Eleven* and David Tomas Martinez, author of *Hustle*.

For more information on literature at the NEA, go to [arts.gov/artistic-fields/literature](https://www.arts.gov/artistic-fields/literature). For more information on the NEA and its programs, go to [arts.gov](https://www.arts.gov). The NEA is on Twitter @NEAarts as well as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and iTunes.

