

Established by Congress in 1965, the National Endowment for the Arts is the independent federal agency that works to give people across America the opportunity to participate in and experience the arts. The Arts Endowment is the only funder, public or private, that provides access to the arts in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories. The National Endowment for the Arts has awarded \$5.6 billion since its inception, supporting activities such as performances, exhibitions, healing arts and arts education programs, festivals, and artist residencies.

## BUDGET & GRANTMAKING

The Arts Endowment awards grants for projects to nonprofit organizations nationwide, as well as supports fellowships for American writers and translators of world literature, and honorifics in jazz and the folk and traditional arts. The grant review process is rigorous:

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

40 percent of the NEA's grantmaking budget is awarded directly to the states through their state and regional arts agencies, reaching millions more people in thousands of communities. The Arts Endowment requires that a portion of every state and regional partnership grant be allocated to programs reaching underserved communities.

The National Endowment for the Arts' FY 2021 appropriation of \$167.5 million constitutes about .003 percent of the federal budget. Approximately 80 percent of the appropriation is distributed as grants and awards to organizations and individuals across the country.

NEA grants provide a significant return on investment of federal dollars. Each dollar awarded by the Arts Endowment in direct grants to nonprofit organizations leverages up to nine dollars in private and other public funds.

## PARTNERSHIPS

Federal agencies and nonprofit organizations partner with the Arts Endowment on national initiatives, using the arts as a platform for enhancing the quality of life for all.

- Examples include: Creative Forces, Poetry Out Loud, Musical Theater Songwriting Challenge, NEA Big Read, Blue Star Museums, and the Citizens' Institute on Rural Design.

## FUNDING DISTRIBUTION AND IMPACT

The Arts Endowment is fully committed to ensuring that all Americans have access and opportunity to engage with the arts:

- The NEA recommends on average 2,300 grants per year, reaching every Congressional District in the country.

The majority of grants (66 percent) go to small and medium sized organizations (budgets up to \$2 million), which tend to support projects that benefit audiences that otherwise might not have access to arts programming.

A significant percentage of grants go to those who have fewer opportunities to participate in the arts:

- 43 percent of Arts Endowment grants take place in high-poverty neighborhoods.
- 35 percent of grants reach low-income audiences or underserved populations such as people with disabilities, people in institutions, and veterans.

Just as Americans are diverse in their backgrounds, so are their communities. The National Endowment for the Arts ensures that the arts thrive across the nation, including small and rural towns:

- 12.2 percent of NEA-funded projects take place in rural communities, with rural communities making up 13.7 percent of the U.S. population.
- 7.9 percent of NEA-funded projects take place in small, metropolitan communities, with small, metropolitan communities making up 8.8 percent of the U.S. population.

Approximately 4,500 communities are served each year through NEA grants. In the years prior to the pandemic, around 45 million Americans attended a live arts event supported by the NEA, including approximately 39,000 concerts, readings, and performances, and 6,000 exhibitions.

## RESEARCH

The Arts Endowment is the national agency of record for arts-related research. Through its Office of Research & Analysis, the agency generates reports and analysis that reveal the characteristics of the U.S. arts ecosystem and the impact of the arts on our everyday lives. In addition to conducting research, the Arts Endowment funds research through Research Grants in the Arts and NEA Research Labs.

**For more about the impact of National Endowment for the Arts grants and programs on U.S. communities, please visit [arts.gov](https://www.arts.gov).**

**The agency also presents stories about artists, arts organizations, and arts events all over the country through our [blog](#), [weekly audio podcast interviews](#), and [magazine](#).**