

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 and Music

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 Americans.

FUNDING THROUGH THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS OPERA PROGRAM:

Direct grants awarded, 1966-2018:

\$160 million

Direct grants awarded in 2018:

\$1.9 million

2018 FUNDING EXAMPLES

Funding new work: **Opera Colorado in Denver, Colorado**, to support the premiere of *Steal a Pencil for Me* by composer Gerald Cohen and librettist Deborah Brevoort. Based on the true story of Jaap and Manja Polak and their friend Ina Soep who were seized from their homes in Amsterdam, deported to Westerbork Transit Camp, and then to Bergen-Belsen Concentration Camp.

Supporting opera for young people: **Opera for the Young in Madison, Wisconsin**, to support the premiere and tour of *Super Storm* by composer Scott Gendel and librettist Diane Garton Edie. The opera concentrates on topics that are of interest to youth as well as cross-curricular subjects that typically appeal to teachers.

Developing future audiences. **Shreveport Opera in Shreveport, Louisiana**, to support the Shreveport Opera's Xpress educational touring program that will reach elementary through high school students in Louisiana, eastern Texas, and southern Arkansas during the 2018-19 academic year.

Supporting technological innovation in live performances. **Friends of Madame White Snake in Brookline, Massachusetts**, to support development and production of *PermaDeath*, the first interactive videogame opera. A consortium of area colleges will develop the necessary technology.

Supporting collaborative productions among opera companies. **Toledo Opera in Toledo, Ohio**, to support the premiere of *I Dream*, a rhythm-and blues opera by composer Douglas Tappin about the last 36 hours of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s life in partnership with Opera Carolina.



2018 FUNDING EXAMPLES, continued

Engaging the community through cross-disciplinary projects. **Opera Memphis in Memphis, Tennessee**, to support 30 Days of Opera—that breaks down barriers preventing new and underserved audiences from attending opera—and the McCleave Project that engages communities of color through collaborations with Memphis’ African-American Hattiloo Theatre and the PRIZM Ensemble, among others.

Providing training for emerging artists. **Wolf Trap in Vienna, Virginia**, to support Wolf Trap Opera’s summer residency program that serves young singers at two pivotal career stages: Filene Young Artists are beginning their careers in opera, and Studio Artists are typically enrolled in or recently finished a master’s degree.

BUILDING THE OPERA FIELD

Through partnerships and grants to OPERA America, the National Endowment for the Arts has provided cornerstone support for numerous initiatives in the opera field, including: the Field Assistance Program to assist small and mid-sized companies; the development of educational initiatives such as Music! Words! Opera!; the Opera Fund to generate new commissions; the New Works Forum to showcase new operas in development, and since 2008, the annual National Opera Week.

Opera programs on radio and television have tremendous reach and the National Endowment for the Arts has consistently supported these programs, providing millions of people with free access to the arts. Through opera and media arts grants, the Arts Endowment supports programs such as the radio broadcasts of the Metropolitan Opera’s Saturday matinees, as well as radio broadcast and live-streaming of Seattle Opera performances, Austin Lyric Opera performances, and Boston Early Music Festival. The agency also supports live simulcasts at Washington National Opera, Opera Memphis, and Dallas Opera.

RESEARCH

The NEA’s report *U.S. Trends in Arts Attendance and Literary Reading: 2002-2017 (2018)*, is a first look at results from the 2017 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts, a partnership with the U.S. Census Bureau. The report found that adult attendance at opera events held steady from 2012 to 2017 despite a five percent increase in U.S. adult population with 5.3 million people attending an opera performance.

RESOURCES

The NEA Opera Honors program (2008-2011) celebrated opera in the United States through lifetime achievement awards bestowed on selected master artists. Video and audio interviews featuring these artists are among the most popular on the Arts Endowment’s YouTube channel.

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

