

Established by Congress in 1965, the NEA is the federal agency that supports and funds the arts to give all Americans the opportunity to experience creativity and participate in the arts. Through partnerships with state arts agencies, local leaders, other federal agencies, and the philanthropic sector, the NEA 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 NEA provided early support for projects such as:

- ***Vietnam Veterans Memorial design competition***
- ***Sundance Film Festival***
- ***Spoletto Festival USA***
- ***PBS's Great Performances***
- ***American Film Institute***

Grantmaking: Funding thousands of activities across the country

The NEA goes where many private funders do not go. It is the only funder, public or private, that supports the arts and creative activities in communities in all 50 states and U.S. territories. Since its inception, the NEA has awarded more than 145,000 grants totaling \$5 billion, encouraging creativity through support of performances, exhibitions, festivals, artist residencies, and other arts projects throughout the country. Nonprofit organizations apply through the NEA's funding categories for project support, individual writers and translators may apply for a fellowship, and the NEA manages honorific programs in jazz and the folk and traditional arts.

Partnerships: Leveraging resources and advancing work

Forty percent of the Arts Endowment's funding goes to state and jurisdictional arts agencies and regional arts organizations to ensure support of the arts and creative activities at the local level. NEA funding also provides the validation that allows grantees to leverage additional support, making it possible for more people to experience the arts.

The NEA also works with more than 20 federal agencies, as well as with state and local governments, on projects that provide opportunities for all Americans to experience quality arts programming throughout the country. Other NEA partnerships include, [Blue Star Museums](#), [Mayors' Institute on City Design](#), [Strong Cities, Strong Communities](#), the [NEA/Walter Reed Healing Arts Partnership](#), and [Poetry Out Loud](#).

Research: Producing and funding reports to advance the arts in diverse areas

The NEA is the only federal agency to conduct analyses of the value and impact of the arts in American life. The NEA Office of Research & Analysis produces research publications, conferences, and data sources on arts-related topics for diverse audiences. In recent years, the NEA launched a new research grant opportunity and convenes a [Federal Interagency Task Force on the Arts and Human Development](#).

Content: Offering free resources for learning about the arts and artists

The NEA produces an extensive menu of free content including a [quarterly magazine NEA Arts](#), a [weekly podcast](#), and [daily blog, Arts Works](#), in addition to occasional webinars, webcasts, and videos to provide both information about arts funding and management as well as offer an intimate view of arts practitioners and their work.