

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS (NEA)

PROMOTING CREATIVITY AND PUBLIC ACCESS TO THE ARTS

ACTION NEEDED

We urge Congress to support a budget of \$176 million for the NEA in the FY 2009 Interior Appropriations bill to restore funding for the creation, preservation, and presentation of the arts in America through the NEA's core programs—*Access to Artistic Excellence*, *Challenge America: Reaching Every Community*, *Federal/State Partnerships*, and *Learning in the Arts*.

NEA Annual Appropriations, FY 1992 to present (in millions of dollars)

Fiscal Year	'92	'93	'94	'95	'96	'97	'98	'99	'00	'01	'02	'03	'04	'05	'06	'07	'08
Appropriation	176.0	174.5	170.2	162.3	99.5	99.5	98.0	98.0	97.6	104.8	115.2	115.7	121.0	121.3	124.4	124.4	144.7

Note: Figures above are not adjusted for inflation. Source: NEA

TALKING POINTS

The NEA supports artistic excellence and improves access to the arts by granting funds to nonprofit arts organizations.

- In FY 2007, the NEA awarded approximately \$60 million in 2,158 direct grants in 435 congressional districts through its program funds.
- Forty percent of all NEA program funds—approximately \$40 million in FY 2007—are re-granted on a formula basis through the state arts agencies, ensuring that federal funding has an even greater reach.
- Through programs like *Challenge America*, the NEA supports artistic activities that reach underserved populations.
- On average, each NEA grant leverages at least seven dollars from other state, local, and private sources, magnifying the impact of the federal investment.
- With more funding, the NEA's core programs could better bring the best in the arts to all Americans:
 - Additional funds would allow the size of individual grants to increase, after having declined steadily since the NEA's budget was cut by 40 percent in FY 1996.
 - Inadequate funding has caused many high-quality grant applications to go unfunded.

The NEA contributes to the development and economic growth of communities nationwide.

- NEA grants to organizations and local arts agencies help them maximize their economic and social contributions to their communities.
- The nonprofit arts industry generates \$166.2 billion annually in economic activity, supports 5.7 million full-time equivalent jobs, and returns \$12.6 billion to the federal government in income taxes. Measured against direct federal cultural spending of about \$1.4 billion, that's a return of nearly nine to one. (Figures from Americans for the Arts, *Arts & Economic Prosperity III* study).
- The arts attract new tourism dollars. Sixty-five percent of U.S. travelers include cultural events on their trips, spending an average of \$38.05 per event in addition to the cost of admission on event-related items such as meals, parking, and retail sales.
- America's arts and entertainment are leading exports, with estimates of more than \$30 billion annually in overseas sales. Public spending on the arts helps position the United States to compete globally.

The NEA supports lifelong learning in the arts, through grants, partnerships, research, and national initiatives.

- Students with an education rich in the arts have better grade point averages in core academic subjects, score better on standardized tests, and have lower drop-out rates than students without arts education. (*Critical Evidence*: <http://www.aep-arts.org/files/publications/Critical%20Evidence.pdf>, published by the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies in collaboration with the Arts Education Partnership.)
- NEA grants support a wide range of projects, including educational programs for adults, collaborations between state arts agencies and state education agencies, and K–12 partnerships between arts institutions and educators.
- The NEA funds school-based and community-based grant programs that help children and youth acquire knowledge and understanding of and skills in the arts. Projects must provide participatory learning and engage students with skilled artists, teachers, and excellent art.

(continued)

BACKGROUND

The arts infrastructure of the United States is critical to the nation's cultural well-being as well as its economic vitality. It is supported by a remarkable combination of government, business, foundation, and individual donors. In a striking example of federal/state partnership, the NEA distributes 40 percent of its program dollars to state arts agencies, conditional on each state devoting its own appropriated funds. This partnership ensures that each state has a stable source of arts funding and policy. These grants, combined with state legislative appropriations and other dollars, are distributed widely to strengthen arts infrastructures and ensure broad access to the arts.

The NEA has provided strategic leadership and investment in the arts for over 40 years. Among its proudest accomplishments is the growth of arts activity in areas of the nation that were previously underserved or not served at all. Americans can now see professional productions and exhibitions of high quality in their own home towns, and every congressional district now receives direct NEA grants.

Through its core programs—*Access to Artistic Excellence*, *Challenge America: Reaching Every Community*, *Federal/State Partnerships*, and *Learning in the Arts*—the NEA funds dance, design, folk & traditional arts, literature, local arts agencies, media arts, multidisciplinary, museums, music, musical theater, opera, presenting, theater, and visual arts. In addition to direct grants, the NEA provides important leadership that advances the arts sector through national initiatives, research, and publications.

The American public favors spending federal tax dollars in support of the arts, and has made its feelings known to Congress. **During the 110th Congress, the House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee, chaired by Congressman Norm Dicks (D-6-WA), approved an increase of \$35 million to the NEA. The Senate Appropriations Committee approved a \$9 million increase, first proposed by the Senate Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Subcommittee, chaired by Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA). The result is that Congress voted to increase the NEA by \$20.3 million, and began to lay the foundation for full restoration of NEA funding to its 1992 level.** The House also defeated three amendments to decrease NEA appropriations. Further, in 2007, a bipartisan group of 101 Representatives signed a “Dear Colleague” letter advocating an increase.

With the NEA receiving partial restoration in FY 2008, and funded at a level of \$144.7 million, the arts community seeks a total appropriation of \$176 million for FY 2009, which would restore the agency to its 1992 level. This amounts to just 51 cents per capita, as compared to 69 cents per capita in FY 1992. The president has requested \$128.4 million for FY 2009.