

# NATIONAL ENDOWMENT for the ARTS

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# Welcome

The National Endowment for the Arts strives to make the arts accessible to communities across the nation through grantmaking, partnerships, and research. But beyond this, the Arts Endowment also plays an important role as a convener, connector, collaborator, thought leader, catalyst, and amplifier. It is a national arts resource and a key partner in building healthy arts and cultural ecosystems that are so vital to vibrant and opportunity-rich communities.

Strong arts and cultural ecosystems create deeply impactful arts opportunities and support the ability of the arts to play critical roles in our nation's well-being, our economic vitality, and our social fabric.

## The arts

- help us make sense of the world;
- offer us different ways of thinking, feeling, and being;
- are a source of inspiration and innovation;
- are critically important to our resilience; and
- help us protect and advance our humanity.

All of this is essential as we deal with the challenges of our time, from the pandemic to an increased polarization and a heightened awareness of historic inequities. We have the opportunity now to plan and build our future—a future that includes creativity, imagination, innovation, empathy, and the promise of all Americans reaching their full potential.

I continue to be inspired by what is possible and look forward to the National Endowment for the Arts serving as a key partner in this work.

Maria Rosario Jackson, PhD  
Chair, National Endowment for the Arts

Chair Jackson with 2009 NEA National Heritage Fellows the Birmingham Sunlights during her trip to Alabama in July 2022. Photo by Allison Hill







# What is the NEA?

The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), established by Congress in 1965, is an independent federal agency that is the largest public funder of the arts and arts education in communities nationwide and a catalyst of public and private support for the arts. The NEA's mission is based on an abiding conviction that the arts play an integral role in our national life and public discourse. The arts strengthen and promote the well-being and resilience of people and communities. By advancing equitable opportunities for arts participation and practice, the NEA fosters and sustains an environment in which the arts belong to and benefit everyone in the United States.

The NEA serves our nation and communities by:

- Stewarding the creation and preservation of art and culture through grantmaking and awards that support the work of writers and translators, nonprofit arts organizations, public agencies, and educational institutions, and that enable performances, exhibitions, healing arts projects, arts-based community development, festivals, and artist residencies across all disciplines and in all communities.
- Developing the next generation of our nation's creative and innovative thinkers through ensuring K-12 arts education for all students.
- Investing in the diversity, strength, and capacity of the arts ecosystem while expanding the reach and depth of local impact through funding and partnerships with local arts agencies, state arts agencies, and regional arts organizations.
- Fostering the integration of arts, culture, and design in civic infrastructure through partnerships across federal, state, local, and tribal governments and community-based partners in order to advance health, social, and economic priorities.
- Partnering with artists and communities to recover from natural, social, and economic disasters and providing resources, thought partnership, and other support.
- Seeding innovations in practice and expanded appreciation of the value and impact of arts and culture through leading-edge research.
- Growing appreciation, participation, and support for the arts by expanding the definition of the arts to celebrate a wide range of expressions, including everyday engagement.
- Amplifying the artistry and creative depths of artists, culture bearers, and organizations through our blog, podcasts, *American Artscape* magazine, social media, and more.

Darrell Lonebear (Northern Arapaho) was awarded a Folk Art Mentoring Project Grant from the Wyoming Arts Council. Photo by Josh Chrysler

With support from an NEA Our Town grant, the Asian Economic Development Association (AEDA) developed a creative placemaking initiative to revitalize the Little Mekong neighborhood of St. Paul, Minnesota. Photo courtesy of AEDA



## Grantmaking and Awards

The NEA has three project-based grant opportunities for organizations: **Challenge America** are grants for projects in all artistic disciplines to reach historically underserved communities that have rich and dynamic cultural identities, and they may be a good entry point for organizations that are new to applying for federal funding. **Grants for Arts Projects** are awarded in all artistic disciplines and, as the NEA's largest grant program for organizations, provides comprehensive and expansive funding opportunities for the nation's communities. **Our Town** makes strategic investments to strengthen communities by awarding a limited number of creative placemaking grants that use arts, culture, and design to advance local priorities, like health, community development, environment/climate, and public safety, among other community issues and aspirations.

The NEA offers two funding opportunities in research: **Research Grants in the Arts** fund research studies that investigate the value and impact of the arts, and **NEA Research Labs** fund transdisciplinary research teams grounded in social and behavioral sciences, yielding empirical insights about the arts for the benefit of arts and non-arts sectors alike.

NEA funds **Literature Fellowships** for translation and creative writing in prose and poetry, the only grants to individuals that the NEA awards.

Additionally, the NEA presents two lifetime achievement awards: **NEA Jazz Masters Fellowships**, the nation's highest honor in jazz, and **National Heritage Fellowships**, the nation's highest honor in the folk and traditional arts. The NEA also solicits nominations from the public for the **National Medal of Arts**, the highest award given to artists and arts patrons by the U.S. government and presented by the president.

We encourage you to volunteer to be an NEA panelist and review applications for funding! Go to [arts.gov/panelist-signup](https://arts.gov/panelist-signup) to find out how.



# Arts Education for All Students

The NEA supports arts programming for middle and high school students through initiatives such as Poetry Out Loud, a national high school poetry recitation competition; Musical Theater Songwriting Challenge, a national competition for high school songwriters; and Shakespeare in American Communities, where professional theater groups provide performances and educational workshops to middle and high schools and juvenile justice facilities throughout the country.

In addition to the initiatives for middle and high school students, close to 75 percent of NEA arts education grants directly engage historically underserved urban and rural populations through Direct Learning grants to increase student knowledge and skills in the arts; Professional Development grants to build the capacity of classroom teachers and teaching artists; and Collective Impact grants, which transform schools and communities by providing access and engagement in the arts for all students through collective, systemic approaches.

The NEA also supports the ecosystem for arts education through investments in national and state-level leaders and networks. Nationally, the NEA participates in the Federal Interagency Working Group for Youth Programs comprising representatives from more than 20 federal agencies and supports the Arts Education Partnership, the national hub for arts education, which is jointly funded by the U.S. Department of Education. The NEA also provides support at the state level for the State Education Agency Directors of Arts Education and for State Arts Agency Arts Education Managers.

Through a combination of grantmaking, with a focus on closing the opportunity gap for students who have the least arts education access, and national and state leadership and initiatives, the Arts Endowment works to ensure every student in every community is engaged and empowered through an excellent arts education.

Students participate in arts programming at Deep Center, a creative writing and arts center in Savannah, Georgia, supported by the Arts Endowment. Photo by Laura Mulder





Military families play on *Whammock!*, an installation by artist Toshiko Horiuchi MacAdam at the New Children's Museum in San Diego, California, during a Blue Star Museums event in June 2022. Photo by Brandon Colbert Photography

## Strategic Partnerships

The NEA's Partnership Agreements fund arts agencies in 56 states and jurisdictions as well as six regional arts organizations. Through partnerships with state arts agencies (SAAs) and regional arts organizations (RAOs), the Arts Endowment is able to reach more communities and have a deep impact on the local population and artists. The SAA partnerships specifically provide funding for folk and traditional arts, arts education, and reach underserved communities in their localities. Regional partnership agreements support touring and presenting activities that lift up existing talent and bring the arts to areas that wouldn't normally offer professional performing arts shows and experiences.

In addition to partnering with SAAs and RAOs, the NEA collaborates with other federal agencies, state and local governments, nonprofit arts organizations, and private entities on initiatives that bring quality arts activities and experiences to benefit communities nationwide in innovative and impactful ways, resulting in a stronger civic infrastructure—the relationships and mechanisms we rely on to care for each other. Here are a few examples:

- Through our Creative Forces initiative, in partnership with the U.S. Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs, the NEA seeks to improve the **health, wellness, and quality of life** for military and veteran populations exposed to trauma, as well as their families and caregivers through creative arts therapies and community arts activities.
- The NEA also addresses **social and economic development** through programs like Mayors' Institute on City Design, a partnership with the U.S. Conference of Mayors, which convenes mayors and design experts to solve the most critical planning and design challenges facing their cities; and Citizens' Institute on Rural Design, a partnership with the Housing Assistance Council, which offers competitive funding to small towns and rural and tribal communities for hosting local design workshops to develop actionable solutions to the community's pressing design challenges.
- NEA partnerships also engage communities in **broadening their understanding of the world** through public programs like NEA Big Read, in partnership with Arts Midwest, which supports the power of a shared reading experience; and Blue Star Museums, a partnership with Blue Star Families, which provides free admission to museums nationwide for active-duty military personnel and their families each summer.
- Through a partnership with the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA), the NEA is bringing awareness to GSA's Art in Architecture program to promote federal art commission opportunities for artists in federal buildings and physical infrastructure that will reflect the diversity of communities across the nation.

# National Arts Resource

## COVID Response

To assist nonprofit arts organizations in the country struggling from the COVID-19 pandemic, Congress appropriated to the NEA \$75 million through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act in 2020 and \$135 million through the American Rescue Plan (ARP) in 2021. The funding allowed the agency to award grants to preserve jobs and help the arts and culture sector recover, rebuild, and reopen.

## Equity

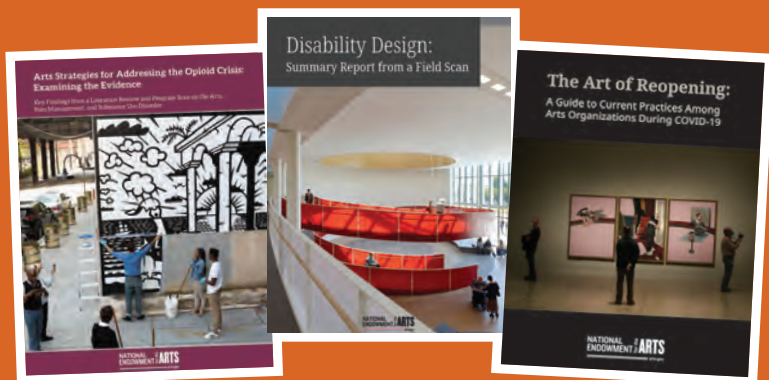
The NEA has developed an Equity Action Plan, which is in alignment with the Arts Endowment's FY 2022-2026 Strategic Plan in which the cross-cutting objective states, "The NEA will model diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in the arts through all of its activities and operations." The Equity Action Plan provides a roadmap for the creation of meaningful and innovative programs and initiatives. These opportunities will increase arts participation and engagement in historically underserved communities and develop concrete policies and procedures for providing access accommodations for persons with disabilities and limited English proficiency. Combined, these efforts present a comprehensive approach to embedding equity within all of the agency's programs, operations, and policy-making processes. In addition, as encouraged by White House Executive Orders, the NEA has ongoing initiatives to engage historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs), Hispanic-serving institutions (HSIs) and Native American communities. Read more at [arts.gov/equity](https://arts.gov/equity).

## Convenings

The NEA offers convenings on issues important to artists, the arts community, and others interested in the many roles and benefits of the arts in our society. The agency has held convenings such as the Americas Cultural Summit, an international exchange of art, information, and ideas among leaders representing public arts agencies and cultural ministries from across the Americas; a series of Sound Health Network webinars that examine music's role in advancing health and well-being; and Native Arts & Culture: Resilience, Reclamation, and Relevance, a first-of-its-kind national convening to discuss some of the issues affecting Native arts and culture today.

## Research

Research into the value and impact of the arts is a core function of the NEA. Through accurate, relevant, and timely analyses and reports, the NEA explains the factors, conditions, and characteristics of the U.S. arts ecosystem and the impact of the arts on other areas of American life. In addition to two grant programs and its research reports, as well as participation in cross-sector initiatives such as the Sound Health Network focused on the impact of music on health and wellness and the Federal Interagency Task Force on the Arts and Human Development, the NEA's Office of Research & Analysis partners with the U.S. Department of Commerce's Bureau of Economic Analysis to provide annual reports of the economic impact of arts and culture in the United States.





# The Economic Value of the Arts in Our Communities

While the NEA supports arts projects and initiatives that positively impact communities' health, education, and vitality, the arts also have an important economic value on communities. This data from the most recent Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Account (2020), created through a partnership of the NEA and U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis to track the annual economic impact of arts and cultural production, shows the impact of the arts on the U.S. economy.



## More than \$876 Billion

What arts and culture contribute to the United States economy each year, or

**4.2 percent** of the U.S. Gross Domestic Product

## More than 4.5 Million

Number of workers in the arts and culture sector in the United States, receiving \$446 billion in compensation



## \$28 Billion

Trade surplus generated by the arts economy

To find out more about the NEA, go to our website, [arts.gov](https://arts.gov) or scan this code:



FRONT COVER: 2022 NEA Jazz Masters Stanley Clarke, Billy Hart, and Donald Harrison, Jr. performing at the tribute concert. Photo by Scott Chernis; Alice Sheppard and Laurel Lawson perform in Kinetic Light's dance work *Descent*. Photo by Jay Newman/BRITT Festival; The Theater Offensive of Boston, Massachusetts, presents liberating art by, for, and about queer and trans people of color. Photo courtesy of Theater Offensive; 2022 Poetry Out Loud National Champion Mia Ronn. Photo by 5:00 Films & Media; Cine Las Americas showcases Latino and Indigenous films from both North and South America in Austin, Texas. Photo courtesy of Cine Las Americas



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