



National Humanities Alliance



FEDERATION OF
STATE HUMANITIES
COUNCILS

Americans who recognize the importance of the humanities to public culture are grateful for the \$75 million in emergency funding to the National Endowment for the Humanities as part of the CARES Act. However, humanities institutions and educators face intense strains that threaten their ability to support K-16 education, serve communities, and maintain employment. Currently available funding will cover only a fraction of the needed assistance. Consequently, we reiterate the call for a total investment of \$500 million in supplemental funding to support the humanities sector.

- Museums, historic sites, and independent libraries and archives are losing over \$1 billion a month due to the loss of visitors and other revenue sources and have been consequently forced to reduce staff.
- As educational and cultural institutions continue to face these economic strains, they will be unable to hire in the coming months, ensuring that unemployment will continue to grow as students graduate.
- The crisis has also placed burdens on humanities educators as they work to educate students in unprecedented circumstances. The educational system relies heavily on humanities educators, both in K-12 and higher education, who are casually-employed and on contract, and they are especially vulnerable to the impacts of the crisis.
- Early reports from state humanities councils, which have already begun making grants using the initial \$30 million in emergency funds allocated through NEH, indicate that available funds will be sufficient to fund only a fraction of applications received, particularly from smaller organizations in predominantly rural areas.
- The needs of cultural institutions such as libraries, museums, local historic sites, and community centers, which serve as vital centers of rural communities and small towns, will become especially acute as state and local budgets are gutted because of the decline of sales taxes and other private fundraising slows. Many such institutions, and the jobs they provide, will disappear without financial resources to sustain them.

Even in the face of these strains, educators are working to provide a high-quality learning experience to students at all levels and cultural institutions are continuing to serve their communities in crucial ways by:

- Offering programs that connect people virtually, which are in particularly high demand as we are all physically isolated, and working to broaden technological access to ensure these community connections;
- Digitizing content to provide ongoing access to museums and libraries and to support parents and teachers as they advance education amid trying circumstances;
- Preserving artifacts from the current moment to ensure a robust historical record that we can learn from in the future; and
- Helping students, policymakers, and the general public better understand the contemporary crisis through analysis of past pandemics and other comparable emergencies.

To ensure that communities are supported by the humanities during this difficult time and that cultural institutions survive to serve the American public once the crisis has passed, additional investment in the NEH is needed to:

- Support educational and cultural institutions in maintaining staff and hiring new graduates to sustain employment and the talent pipeline.
- Ensure, through this operational support, that educational and cultural institutions have the capacity to promote individual wellbeing, connect communities in these isolating times, and preserve the cultural heritage of this historic moment. Discussion-based humanities programs that serve veterans and medical professionals developed with NEH support have a proven record of helping individuals and communities in the wake of crises.
- Ensure, through this operational support, that educational and cultural institutions have the capacity to support the public and policymakers in understanding and addressing the challenges posed by the pandemic.
- Support the digital infrastructure of educational and cultural organizations to allow them to meet the demands of the crisis by providing high-quality resources for students and communities.
- Ensure that state humanities councils can provide support to thousands of community cultural and historical institutions, especially those with budgets under \$500,000, struggling to maintain staff and operations.

We also urge Congress to ensure that additional funds in the Payroll Protection Program are available to meet the needs of museums, independent libraries, local historic sites, scholarly societies, and community centers.