



SUPPORT THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES (NEH)

ACTION NEEDED

We urge Congress to provide no less than \$155 million in FY 2019 funding for the National Endowment for the Humanities and to forcefully reject any efforts to eliminate the agency. The NEH is funded under the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

FUNDING OVERVIEW

In FY 2016 and FY 2017, the NEH saw its first increases in funding since FY 2010. Even still, when adjusted for inflation, the NEH's funding has decreased by more than 22% since 2010.

NEH Annual Appropriations, FY 2010 to Present (in millions of dollars)

Table with 9 columns: FY 2010, FY 2011, FY 2012, FY 2013, FY 2014, FY 2015, FY 2016, FY 2017, FY 2018. Values range from 138 to 167.5.

\* Proposed Senate Appropriation + Proposed House Appropriation

ABOUT THE NEH

The NEH's mission is to strengthen our nation by supporting projects and programs in the humanities and by making the humanities available to all Americans. The NEH fulfills its mandate by:

- Providing training for thousands of school, college, and university teachers;
Reaching tens of millions of Americans with television and radio documentaries, museum exhibitions, and reading and discussion programs in museums and libraries across the nation;
Supporting, in partnership with the Library of Congress, efforts in every state to digitize and make accessible hundreds of thousands of pages of historic U.S. newspapers;
Supporting scholarly research that has resulted in significant archaeological discoveries, the publication of thousands of books, and the pioneering of innovative digital methods.

THE FEDERAL INTEREST IN THE HUMANITIES

With a modest federal investment, the NEH plays an outsized role in:

- CULTIVATING AN INFORMED CITIZENRY. The NEH was established in 1965 in recognition of the unique role the humanities play in helping U.S. citizens develop the wisdom, vision, and knowledge required to participate in a thriving democracy. To this day, the NEH supports excellence in humanities research, teaching, and learning opportunities that provide millions of Americans the knowledge of our history and culture essential for engaged citizenship;
ENSURING THAT ALL AMERICANS BENEFIT FROM THE HUMANITIES. NEH funding, with the support of the state humanities councils, reaches every state and congressional district;
CATALYZING PRIVATE INVESTMENT IN LOCAL ECONOMIES. A modest amount of federal investment catalyzes private, local support for the humanities. The NEH grantees are often able to leverage their award for greater, local investment. In addition, the NEH's investment in museums and historic sites around the country has played a key role in developing local tourist economies;
PRESERVING CULTURAL HERITAGE: Without investment to preserve and make accessible artifacts and documents from our past, key components of our cultural heritage would ultimately be lost.

## SAMPLE PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

- **SERVING VETERANS:** The *Standing Together* initiative, which emphasizes the innovative ways that the humanities can engage military veterans and communities, was expanded in 2016. A new grant program, *Dialogues on the Experience of War*, uses humanities texts to examine the experience of military service. *Dialogues* has brought discussion programs to veterans in rural and urban communities in 18 states and the District of Columbia since it was started in 2016.
- **REACHING RURAL COMMUNITIES:** The *NEH on the Road* program ensures that high-quality museum exhibitions—originally curated with NEH support—reach all parts of the country. To date, 17 exhibitions have traveled to more than 300 venues in 47 states and the District of Columbia. 53% of the communities served have a population under 50,000. In FY 2016 alone, 99,268 children and adults attended exhibitions. *Common Heritage* awards small grants for public programs that help people preserve their heritage items while contributing copies to digital collections. Awards have been made to 84 communities in 28 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico since 2016.
- **SUPPORTING K–12 STUDENTS AND THEIR TEACHERS:** *National History Day* engages more than 600,000 students and 20,000 to 30,000 teachers annually in each state and territory. Students conduct primary source research, with presentations including documentaries and websites. Students then compete on the local, state, and national level. A 2011 evaluation found that students involved in the program outperformed their peers on state standardized tests. *EDSITEment*, an online collection of educational humanities resources sees 2.5 million unique visitors per year and is used primarily by elementary, middle, and high school educators.
- **PRESERVING LANGUAGE AND HERITAGE OF TRIBAL GROUPS:** A 2015 grant to Ilisagvik College in Utqiagvik (Barrow), Alaska, helped preserve Iñupiaq, a UNESCO-classified endangered language with only about 2,000 fluent speakers. In addition to creating an online database that documents the language, faculty and students created language-acquisition materials—online apps and storybooks—that are used by the local summer reading program and the college’s innovative “language nest” program for pre-K children.

## NEH IN NUMBERS

- Since its inception in 1977, grants made through the NEH Challenge Grants program have leveraged federal funds at a ratio of 3:1, raising \$3,152,110,194 in private support for humanities projects.
- Over 11 million pages of historic American newspapers have been digitized through the National Digital Newspaper Project, with many millions more to follow.
- Grants for research have resulted in the publication of nearly 8,400 books, including 17 Pulitzer Prize winners and 22 Bancroft Prize winners.
- State councils leverage \$5 for every dollar of federal investment. In 2016, 55 state councils supported 2,419 exhibitions, 280 preservation projects, and 1,612 local history programs, attracting a total audience of 5.5 million people.
- Grantees in the Media Projects program in the Division of Public Programs leveraged NEH awards to raise an estimated \$16,221,684 in funds or donations between 2008 and 2014. This is eight times the amount of the NEH awards, or an 8:1 ratio for NEH funds.

## WHAT ARE THE HUMANITIES?

The NEH is the only federal agency tasked with advancing U.S. achievement in the entire range of academic fields in the humanities. As defined by the founding legislation, these include: “language, both modern and classical; linguistics; literature; history; jurisprudence; philosophy; archaeology; comparative religion; ethics; the history, criticism and theory of the arts; those aspects of social sciences which have humanistic content and employ humanistic methods.”

Founded in 1981, the **NATIONAL HUMANITIES ALLIANCE** is a coalition of more than 190 organizations dedicated to the advancement of research, education, preservation, and public engagement in the humanities.