

Talking Points

“Democracy demands wisdom and vision in its citizens. It must therefore foster and support a form of education, and access to the arts and the humanities, designed to make people of all backgrounds and wherever located masters of their technology and not its unthinking servants.”
—*National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act of 1965, establishing NEH and NEA*

SINCE ITS FOUNDING, THE NEH HAS ENJOYED BIPARTISAN SUPPORT

- While the Trump administration proposed the elimination of the NEH in its FY 2018 budget proposal, a Republican-controlled Congress rejected this proposal at every turn in the appropriations process.
- Presidents from both parties have underscored the value of federal investment in the humanities.
- “[O]ur Administration also has shown that through example and encouragement the federal government can attempt to stimulate increased private sector giving for the humanities. We believe that such federal activity is appropriate for the humanities are crucial to the vitality of our Nation’s educational and cultural life and the maintenance of our civilization.” — *President Ronald Reagan, December 1982*
- “Direct Federal expenditures and tax incentives for preserving America’s cultural heritage are a relatively small part of the [federal] budget.... But they should never be viewed as so small that they should be overlooked, nor so insignificant that they might be dismissed.... Only through the memory and understanding of our past, and the past of other countries whose civilizations have contributed to ours, and to the world, can we gain a true sense of the present and the ways in which we might influence the future.” — *President George H.W. Bush, January 1990*

THE NEH IS THE ONLY ENTITY, FEDERAL OR PRIVATE, WITH A NATIONAL MANDATE TO ENSURE ALL AMERICANS HAVE ACCESS TO THE HUMANITIES

- NEH funding reaches every state and territory and every Congressional district.
- *NEH on the Road* ensures that high-quality museum exhibitions—originally curated with NEH support—reach all parts of the country. To date, 17 exhibitions have toured to more than 300 venues in 47 states and the District of Columbia. 53% of the communities served have a population under 50,000.
- Through partnerships with 55 state and territorial humanities councils, the NEH supported 2,419 exhibitions, 280 preservation projects, and 1,612 local history programs in 2016, attracting a total audience of 5.5 million people.
- The NEH has dedicated-funding lines for innovation in humanities curricula in community colleges, HBCUs, Hispanic-Serving Institutions, and Tribal Colleges.



NEH on the Road exhibit, *Our Lives, Our Stories: America’s Greatest Generation*, on view at the Eastland County Museum in Eastland, Texas

WITH A MODEST INVESTMENT, THE NEH STIMULATES PRIVATE, LOCAL INVESTMENT IN THE HUMANITIES AND CULTIVATES TOURISM

- The NEH currently operates on \$147.8 million per year, which represents .006% of the federal budget.
- The NEH matching grants over the last 50 years have generated more than \$4 billion in non-federal donations to humanities projects and institutions.
- Investments in museums and historic sites attract cultural heritage tourism, bolstering local economies. Over several decades, the NEH has supported the development of new exhibitions at Thomas Jefferson’s Monticello. These grants have had an outsized impact on the local economy as Monticello has welcomed nearly 400,000 annual visitors. 93% were from outside Virginia and 50% stayed in a hotel for at least one night adding at least \$13.1 million to the local economy.

THE NEH SUPPORTS INNOVATIVE HUMANITIES PROGRAMS THAT ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF VETERANS NOT BEING MET ELSEWHERE

- **Dialogues on the Experience of War** supports discussion-based programs for veterans and their communities. These programs bring perspective and context to the experience of war through the study of literature, philosophy, history, and other fields of the humanities.
- The NEH funds the **Warrior-Scholar Project**, which prepares veterans for college through a weeklong academic boot camp grounded in humanities texts and writing assignments. 42% of veterans who complete the program end up enrolling in a *U.S. News and World Report* top 20 school, as opposed to only 1% of veteran students nationwide.



Participants in the Warrior-Scholar Project.

THE NEH SUPPORTS K-12 STUDENTS, IN AND OUT OF THE CLASSROOM

- The NEH supports **National History Day**, which engages more than 600,000 students and 20,000 to 30,000 teachers annually in each state and territory in history competitions. A 2011 evaluation of the program found that students involved in the program outperformed their peers on state standardized tests.
- State humanities councils support reading programs for low-income families. Participants outperform peers on standardized tests and spend more time reading as a family.
- In the past five years, the NEH has supported summer professional development programs for nearly 13,000 teachers, providing teachers with a deeper understanding of history and culture while helping them develop new teaching methods, ultimately enriching the classroom experience for an estimated 2 million students.



National History Day participants

THE NEH SAFEGUARDS OUR HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL LEGACIES

- The **National Digital Newspaper Program** is a complex undertaking to digitize historical newspapers from around the country. To date, the NEH has provided support for the digitization of approximately 11 million pages of newspapers published between 1690 to 1963—making these resources accessible for scholars, students, and anyone interested in researching local history or genealogy.
- The NEH has long supported the collection, compilation, and annotation of the papers of prominent Americans, including presidents, reformers, and authors.
- Small historical societies, historic sites, archives, libraries, and town and county records offices around the country receive modest grants to improve their ability to preserve their collections.

THE NEH DRAWS ON THE POWER OF THE HUMANITIES TO BRING COMMUNITIES TOGETHER

- Through **Community Conversations**, the NEH supports community-based discussion programs that engage a broad spectrum of Americans in addressing contemporary challenges.
- To correspond with the release of Ken Burns's NEH-funded documentary, *The Vietnam War*, the NEH supported engagement programs across the country. Led by historians, veterans, and even anti-war activists, participants discussed the legacy of the Vietnam War, their reactions to the film, and their personal experiences at war and at home during the period.
- Through **Common Heritage**, the NEH supports local community events devoted to digitizing cultural heritage materials and family treasures, such as personal photographs, letters, and films.

THE NEH ENABLES CUTTING-EDGE RESEARCH, DEEPENING OUR UNDERSTANDING OF HISTORY AND CULTURE

- The NEH has supported research that has led to 17 Pulitzer Prize-winning books and 22 Bancroft Prizes, works that have profoundly shaped our understanding of politics, literature, philosophy, and history.
- NEH funding has led to major archaeological finds, including the rediscovery of the original settlements of Jamestown and Plymouth.
- Through its **Documenting Endangered Languages** program, a partnership with the National Science Foundation, the NEH has provided \$11.4 million in support of research that records, documents, and archives languages that are in danger of dying out.

