



Budget Request For Fiscal Year 2025

**Submitted to Congress
March 11, 2024**

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The Honorable Jeff Merkley
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Simpson
Chairman
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chellie Pingree
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Merkley, Ranking Member Murkowski, Chairman Simpson, and Ranking Member Pingree:

On behalf of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), I am pleased to submit the attached funding justification in support of the President's fiscal year (FY) 2025 budget request for the NEA. The Budget provides \$210.1 million for the NEA and funds a total of 167 full-time equivalents. This amount will enable to NEA to fulfill its mission to foster an environment in which the arts benefit everyone in the United States.

Arts and cultural industries contribute over \$1 trillion¹ to the U.S. economy, yet we know there is more economic potential and even broader benefits of arts and culture in the lives of Americans and in our society. Arts contribute to health and well-being, animate and strengthen physical spaces, fuel our democracy, and drive equitable outcomes for communities across the country. In FY2025 the NEA will expand the impacts of arts in our society by ensuring more Americans have the opportunity to live *Artful Lives* and experience and benefit from the arts in their community, by expanding support for the ways arts contribute to the health and well-being of individuals and communities, and focusing on the strength and vitality of the arts sector.

Every American should have the opportunity to experience and benefit from the arts. *Artful Lives* is an inclusive concept that contains everything from everyday practices to the making,

¹ Source: [2021 U.S. Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Account \(ACPSA\), National Endowment for the Arts and the Bureau of Economic Analysis.](#)

presentation, and dissemination of professional art from all traditions. The concept includes a wide range of artistic practices, from theater and dance to less recognized artistic fields such as fashion and culinary arts. To bring artful lives to fruition, the NEA is undertaking a series of actions to ensure full arts participation. In FY 2025, the agency will sustain core funding to opportunities such as the Grants for Arts and Challenge America programs supporting the creation and promotion of the arts across disciplines. The NEA will continue to support the foundational experience and benefit of arts to children and youth through our arts education programs. To ensure NEA resources reach all communities the NEA will deepen its work around arts access with attention to rural, tribal, and other underserved communities. Moreover, in response to requests the agency has received at Tribal Consultations, the agency will establish an Office of Native Arts and Tribal Affairs. Recognizing the importance of arts organizations at the national, state and local level, the NEA will sustain investments to state and regional partners and will grow support to Local Arts Agencies (LAA), expanding the reach of the Agency through community-based arts organizations.

In FY 2025, the NEA will deepen its work at the intersection of [arts and health](#). For more than a decade, the NEA has provided grants, engaged in key partnerships, conducted research, and contributed to the growing evidence of the role of the arts in health and healing. Strengthening and building on some of our national initiatives—[Creative Forces](#), [United We Stand](#), [Sound Health Network](#)—and our robust body of research, the NEA will launch a new initiative focused on healing through the arts. This initiative will be informed by the Interagency Working Group on Arts, Health, and Civic Infrastructure, a collaboration between the NEA and the Department of Health and Human Services and will support new projects and partnerships at the federal, state and local level that advance the health and well-being of communities and individuals.


Finally, none of the potential impact of our programming is possible without good jobs in the arts and a healthy arts and cultural sector. The arts and cultural organizations continue to feel the economic effects of COVID 19 and persistent social, environmental, and economic shocks. The NEA draws on all of its functions to understand and support arts leaders and organizations as they adapt their practices to sustain and grow access to the arts. To do this, the NEA takes both external and internal action. Externally, in addition to maintaining key funding opportunities, the agency is making investments in research, convenings, thought leadership, and partnerships to better understand trends in the field and elevate and scale promising solutions. Internally, the NEA is refining existing programs to better meet the needs of the public and has changed its organizational structure to better support partnership and innovation.

In support of the above efforts, the FY 2025 justification also reflects the agency's continuing investment in its administrative functions. In particular, the agency will bolster its bench strength by adding staffing resources to respond to the year-over-year increases in grant application numbers. Further, the Agency will continue improving its information technology systems and cybersecurity infrastructure.

I believe all people have the capacity to be creative, imaginative, and expressive. Further, the ability for all people to experience arts, culture, and design; tell their own stories on their own terms; and participate in the creative evolution of our country is core to our American ethos and our democracy. It is a critical dimension of a just society. This year's Budget significantly

strengthens the NEA's capacity to advance this work at a time when our country deeply needs and can benefit from all that the arts have to offer.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Rosario Jackson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Maria Rosario Jackson, Ph.D.
Chair, National Endowment for the Arts

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Our History

The National Endowment for the Arts, established by Congress in 1965, is an independent federal agency that is the largest funder of the arts and arts education in communities nationwide and a catalyst of public and private support for the arts. By advancing equitable opportunities for arts participation and practice, the NEA fosters and sustains an environment in which the arts benefit everyone in the United States.

The agency partners closely with the nation's 56 state and jurisdictional arts agencies and 6 regional arts organizations, as well as with private entities, leveraging resources to provide more arts funding and arts programs across the country. Through its grant awards, strategic partnerships, and honorific awards, the NEA supports learning in and about the arts, celebrating the nation's rich and diverse cultural heritage, and promoting equitable access to the arts in every community in the United States.

The NEA's primary activities include grantmaking to nonprofit arts organizations, public arts agencies and organizations, and individual writers and translators. It also is a national leader in the field and a convener on issues important to the arts community and people working at the intersections of arts and other fields such as health, community development, and education, among others. The NEA supports and conducts groundbreaking arts-based research and disseminates important information through features on notable artists and arts organizations in communities nationwide via our blog, podcasts, *American Artscape* magazine, and social media.

The NEA seeks to bring meaningful arts experiences to all Americans.

Our Mission, Vision, and Strategic Goals

Our Mission

The arts strengthen and promote the well-being and resilience of people and communities. By advancing equitable opportunities for arts participation and practice, the National Endowment for the Arts fosters and sustains an environment in which the arts belong to everyone in the United States.

The NEA mission is based on an abiding conviction that the arts play an integral role in our national life and public discourse.

Our Vision

A nation in which the arts are essential to our democracy by nourishing creative enterprise, freedom of thought, imagination, and inquiry.

By giving voice to unique talents and perspectives through creative expression, the arts embody and reflect the boldness of our democratic experiment.

Our Strategic Goals

The NEA's FY 2025 budget request is built on the foundation of the following goals established in the Agency's Strategic Plan for FY 2022-2026.

Support opportunities for all people to participate in the arts and arts education.

Integrate the arts with strategies that promote the well-being and resilience of people and communities.

Build capacity and infrastructure within the arts sector through knowledge-sharing, tools, resources, and evidence-based practices.

Pursue and adopt excellent operational practices to support the agency's mission.

Across the four strategic goals, the NEA will support the cross-cutting objective to model diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in the arts through all of its activities and operations.

FY 2025 BUDGET REQUEST

Budget Request by Program Activity

Table 1: FY 2023 - FY 2025 Budget
(\$ in thousands)

Program Activity	FY 2023 Enacted	FY 2024 Annualized Level*	FY 2025 Request
Promotion of the Arts			
Direct Endowment Grants	97,470		98,760
State and Regional Partnerships	<u>64,980</u>		<u>65,840</u>
Subtotal	162,450		164,600
Program Support	2,500		2,500
Administration	42,050		43,000
Total	207,000	207,000	210,100

FY 2023 excludes reimbursable funding, use of gift funds, and obligations funded by the American Rescue Plan.

** A full-year 2024 appropriation for this account was not enacted at the time the Budget was prepared; therefore, the Budget assumes this account is operating under the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2024 and Other Extensions Act (Division A of Public Law 118-15, as amended). The amounts included for 2024 reflect the annualized level provided by the continuing resolution.*

FY 2025 Proposed Appropriations Language

The President's FY 2025 Budget includes the following appropriations language:

“For necessary expenses to carry out the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act of 1965, \$210,100,000 shall be available to the National Endowment for the Arts for the support of projects and productions in the arts, including arts education and public outreach activities, through assistance to organizations and individuals pursuant to section 5 of the Act, for program support, and for administering the functions of the Act, to remain available until expended.”

Promotion of the Arts

“Promotion of the Arts” refers to a wide range of ways in which the NEA supports the availability of opportunities for arts engagement and ensures that all people in our country have the opportunity to benefit from the arts and live artful lives. The NEA’s core grant programs include both Direct Endowment Grants and State and Regional Partnerships. The NEA awards project-based grants to organizations nationwide including opportunities for public engagement with the arts and arts education, integration of the arts with strategies promoting health and well-being of people and communities, and for the improvement of overall cultural capacity and infrastructure within the arts sector. Projects may be small, medium, or large; existing or new; and may take place in any part of the nation’s 50 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. jurisdictions.

Program Activity (\$000)	FY 2023 Enacted	FY 2024	FY 2025 Request
Promotion of the Arts			
Direct Endowment Grants			
Project Support	86,870		88,160
Challenge America	<u>10,600</u>		<u>10,600</u>
subtotal	97,470		98,760
State and Regional Partnerships			
Basic Plan Support	51,139		51,816
Underserved	<u>13,841</u>		<u>14,024</u>
subtotal	64,980		65,840
Total	162,450	TBD	164,600

FY 2023 excludes reimbursable funding, use of gift funds, and obligations funded by the American Rescue Plan.

Summary:

The NEA requests an FY 2025 funding level of \$164.6 million for Promotion of the Arts. Consistent with agency practice, 60 percent (\$98.76 million) of this request will be used for Direct Endowment Grants and 40 percent (\$65.84 million) will be dedicated to funding the NEA’s State and Regional Partnership Program. Further details regarding these areas are provided in the two sections that follow.

Direct Endowment Grants (Detail by Grant Type)

Program Activity (\$000)	FY 2023 Enacted	FY 2024	FY 2025 Request
	97,470	TBD	98,760

Program Activity (\$000)	FY 2023 Actual Obligations	FY 2024	FY 2025 Request
Direct Endowment Grants			
Challenge America Grant Program	2,600		3,150
Grants for Arts Projects	59,650		58,955
Our Town	4,207		4,000
Healing through the Arts*	-		2,000
Research Grants in the Arts	1,063		800
Research Labs	1,931		1,950
Literature Fellowships	1,200		1,200
Lifetime Honors	325		350
Leadership Initiatives**	<u>24,590</u>		<u>26,355</u>
subtotal	95,566	TBD	98,760

* The NEA intends to further support this new initiative through the use of an additional \$3.0 million in available donations/gift fund balances for a total of \$5.0 million.

** Includes Equity Program that previously was listed separately in FY 2023 and FY 2024.

Summary of Key Change:

Healing through the Arts: \$2.0 million to support new projects and partnerships that advance the health and well-being of communities and individuals. Healing through the Arts initiatives will draw on the lessons learned through existing initiatives such as *Creative Forces®: NEA Military Healing Arts Network* and *Sound Health Network*, as well as relevant NEA research investments to support efforts that engage arts and culture-based strategies to facilitate individual and community healing.

FY 2025 Request

The NEA requests \$98.76 million in FY 2025 for the following Direct Endowment Grant activities:

- Challenge America Grant Program: \$3.15 million to enable small organizations, particularly those that are first-time applicants and/or grantees, to extend the reach of the arts to underserved groups and communities. Challenge America features a robust structure of technical assistance, recognizing that some groups, communities and geographic areas with rich and dynamic artistic and cultural histories and identities may

face potential barriers in seeking federal funding to help activate and bolster cultural life in communities.

- Grants for Arts Projects: \$58.96 million to provide funding opportunities for organizations to strengthen the nation’s arts and cultural ecosystem, enabling all Americans to live artful lives. Through project-based funding, the competitive program supports opportunities for public engagement with the arts and arts education, for the integration of the arts with strategies promoting the health and well-being of people and communities, and for the improvement of overall capacity and capabilities within the arts sector.
- Our Town: \$4.0 million to support creative placemaking projects that integrate arts, culture, and design into efforts that strengthen communities of all sizes by advancing local economic, physical, and/or social outcomes and laying the groundwork for long-term community improvements. These projects require a partnership between a nonprofit organization and a local government entity, with one of the partners being a cultural organization.
- Healing through the Arts: \$2.0 million to support new projects and partnerships at the federal, state and local levels that advance the health and well-being of communities and individuals. Healing through the Arts initiatives will draw on the lessons learned through existing initiatives such as *Creative Forces®: NEA Military Healing Arts Network* and *Sound Health Network* as well as relevant NEA research investments to support efforts that engage arts and culture-based strategies to facilitate individual and community healing. This new initiative will be funded at a total of \$5.0 million, \$2.0 million of requested appropriated funds and \$3.0 million from available donations/gift fund balances.
- Research Grants in the Arts: \$0.8 million to support research that investigates the state of various aspects of the sector and the value and impact of the arts in many domains of American life.
- NEA Research Labs: \$1.95 million for transdisciplinary research teams grounded in the social and behavioral sciences, yielding empirical insights about the arts for the benefit of arts and non-arts sectors alike. (See “[Research \(Detail\)](#)” subsection below.)
- NEA Literature and Translation Fellowships: \$1.2 million awarded to published creative writers and translators. Creative Writing Fellowships of \$25,000 are awarded in alternating years in prose (fiction and creative nonfiction) and poetry, giving recipients the time and space to create, revise, conduct research, and connect with readers. Translation Fellowships grants of up to \$25,000 are awarded to published translators for the translation of specific works of prose, poetry, or drama from other languages into English to make them accessible to American audiences.
- Lifetime Honors: \$0.35 million for the NEA Jazz Masters Fellowships, the highest honor that our government bestows on jazz musicians and advocates, and the NEA National

Heritage Fellowships, recognizing the recipients' artistic excellence and supporting their continuing contributions to our nation's traditional arts heritage. These honors, in addition to the National Medal of Arts funded within [Program Support](#), are awarded by the President of the United States to individuals or groups who are deserving of special recognition by reason of their outstanding contributions to the excellence, growth, support, and availability of the arts in the United States.

- **Leadership Initiatives:** \$26.36 million for the NEA's *Arts Education Partnership*, *Creative Forces®*, *NEA Military Healing Arts Network*, *Poetry Out Loud*, *NEA Big Read*, and *Performing Arts Discovery* programs, among others. These initiatives revolve around partnerships between the NEA and other entities – not only within the arts sector, but also across the federal government, state and regional agencies, educational institutions, and other public and private organizations. These strategic partnerships integrate arts and culture into the whole of society, enabling all Americans to live artful lives. These initiatives are designed to catalyze lasting impacts for artists, arts organizations and communities and help ensure that NEA-funded activities engage populations reflecting the nation's demographic, geographic, and socioeconomic diversity. (See '[Leadership Initiatives \(Details\)](#)' subsection below.)

FY 2024 Activities

The following is a highlight of key grant activities planned for FY 2024. As was the case in FY 2023, the NEA continues to experience an increase in the number of applications across funding categories.

Challenge America Grants

The NEA's Challenge America Grant program – grants which are approved through the Chairman's Delegated Authority – received 523 eligible applications for FY 2024 that requested a combined \$5.23 million in funding support. This increase of 76 eligible applications is 17 percent more than the agency reviewed in FY 2023. The Challenge America Grant program has seen a sustained year-over-year increase in applications.

National Council on the Arts Recommendations

The NEA holds National Council on the Arts (NCA) meetings several times throughout the year. The NCA meetings are where the Council carries out its primary duties that include advising the Chair on agency policies and program, making recommendations to the Chair on applications for grants, funding guidelines and leadership initiatives, and nominating candidates for the National Medal of Arts. Consistent with current practices, the first FY 2024 NCA meeting took place in late October 2023 at which time the Council considered 1,996 eligible applications for Grants for Arts Projects 1 (GAP 1) support, representing nearly \$102.7 million in requests for funding. NEA received 57 more eligible applications for GAP 1 consideration in FY 2024 than the agency received for the same deadline in FY 2023.

The second FY 2024 NCA meeting is slated for late March 2024. At that time, grant recommendations will include the second round of funding for Grants for Arts Projects awards (GAP 2). NEA received 2,183 grant applications for GAP 2 consideration for FY 2024, 255 more than the agency received in FY 2023. Together, these applications are requesting nearly \$114.0 million in total funding.

Also, in March 2024, the NCA will review applications requesting funding in the Our Town program. In August 2023, NEA received 303 applications for consideration representing a 58% increase in applications. The prior year, panels reviewed 175 eligible proposals for funding.

Separately, throughout FY 2024, the NEA anticipates using webcasts to make the National Council on the Arts meetings open to the public, to broadcast special convenings on the arts in various artistic disciplines, and to share special NEA events and initiatives with the public.

United We Stand: Connecting Through Culture

Launched in coordination with the White House United We Stand Summit in September 2022, and the National Endowment for the Humanities, [United We Stand: Connecting Through Culture](#) is an initiative that leverages the arts and humanities to support community healing and resilience in response to hate-motivated violence and other forms of collective trauma. In FY 2024, the NEA will fund additional projects and facilitate peer learning and toolkits to support the expansion of art and culture-based approaches to community healing.

In FY 2023, the NEA provided a grant to Mid-America Arts Alliance in support of the Uvalde LOVE Project a Community Art Therapy Mural. Created in response to the May 2022 mass shooting at Robb Elementary School, the Uvalde Love Project is a project to promote community healing through a combination of workshops and creative art therapies. Community members were supported through their grief and healing with community building and art therapy during workshops and the creation of clay tiles used in a public mosaic mural. The mural was dedicated in August 2023.

FY 2023 Accomplishments/Activities

NEA-funded arts activities are as diverse as the places that foster them. The following examples provide a small window into the range of organizations, geographies, artistic disciplines and types of arts participation made possible through NEA support in FY 2023:

In Lincoln, Nebraska, Neighborhoods Inc. (aka NeighborWorks Lincoln) received \$10,000 to support the development and creation of public art in Lincoln's University Place neighborhood, serving low-income communities in this area. Also, local artists will receive training about how to implement art projects in their community and outreach events will give residents the opportunity to provide input into the art created. (Challenge America)

In Santa Fe, New Mexico, Parallel Studios (aka Currents New Media) received \$25,000 to support the Currents New Media Festival, connecting the public with technology-focused media arts experiences such as immersive and interactive art installations, multimedia performances

and concerts, virtual and augmented reality experiences, artist talks, and free youth education programming. (Grants for Arts Projects)

In Durham, North Carolina, Duke University received \$35,000 to support the Nasher Museum of Art's exhibition *Spirit in the Land*, bringing together works by contemporary artists exploring issues related to ecological awareness and demonstrating how the natural environment and cultural identity are intertwined. (Grants for Arts Projects)

In Berea, Kentucky, Partners for Rural Impact received \$40,000 to support the Appalachian Teaching Artist Fellowship. Teaching artists in rural Eastern Kentucky participate in paid professional learning opportunities, including workshops, a mentorship, and a teaching practicum. Workshops will include training in arts integration, development of standards-aligned lesson plans, and best practices for successful school and community arts partnerships in the rural Appalachian context. (Grants for Arts Projects)

In Round Rock, Texas, Torch Literary Arts received \$10,000 to support in-person and online workshops for writers at all stages of their careers, focused on creating advancement opportunities for Black women writers, as well as a retreat where participants can share ideas and receive professional advice while working on a manuscript in progress. (Grants for Arts Projects)

In Washington, DC, a technical theater workforce development program at THEARC Theater received support through a \$60,000 grant to Building Bridges Across the River, where program participants learn the art and science of technical theater and acquire skills in lighting, sound engineering, set design, stage management, and arts administration. (Grants for Arts Projects)

The City of Wheeling, West Virginia, received \$75,000 to support the development of an arts and culture master plan. In partnership with ARTWORKS around Town, Inc., the city works with area stakeholders to produce a plan that includes a cultural asset map, a regional tourism assessment, a wayfinding signage plan and design, and an action plan for the creation of a new cultural district, gathering input from community members. (Our Town)

In Green River, Utah, Epicenter received \$100,000 to support engagement activities and temporary art and design installations that address affordable housing and downtown revitalization in the rural community. The organization invited artists and designers to collaborate with community stakeholders on the installations, concepts for public spaces and cultural facilities, and affordable housing design ideas. (Our Town)

In Scotch Plains, New Jersey, Music For All Seasons received a \$20,000 grant to bring therapeutic music programs to children and families who reside in shelters for victims of domestic violence in New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and California. The interactive programs are presented in family-friendly gatherings, helping residents of diverse socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds continue the healing process. (Grants for Arts Projects)

Research (Detail)

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 Arts Endowment brings focus to the factors, conditions, and characteristics of the U.S. arts ecosystem and the impact of the arts on other domains of American life. Research Grants in the Arts and NEA Research Labs are two ways that the NEA supports the design and execution of studies addressing priority research topics through the social and behavioral sciences. The NEA also takes steps to apply research findings to improve agency programming and advance field practice.

Research Grants in the Arts

The NEA's [Research Grants in the Arts \(RGA\)](#) program funds rigorous studies that advance public knowledge about the arts by investigating questions supporting the agency's [five-year research agenda](#). The RGA portfolio spans a diverse array of research methods, academic specialties, and artistic disciplines. RGA applicants propose study topics and questions within one of four broad areas:

- 1) What are the measurable impacts of the arts on the following outcome areas?
 - Health and wellness for individuals
 - Cognition and learning
 - Economic growth and innovation
- 2) In what ways do the arts contribute to the healing and revitalization of communities?
- 3) What is the state of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in the arts?
- 4) How is the U.S. arts ecosystem adapting and responding to social, economic, and technological challenges to the sector?

The NEA's FY 2024 research grant application guidelines were the first to integrate the agency's current five-year research agenda. Examples of RGA awards made in FY 2023 include:

- **J.B. Speed Art Museum** (Louisville, KY): To support data analysis for a community-based participatory action research study to identify and characterize the impacts of race-based trauma and gun violence.
- **Riverside Unified School District** (Riverside, CA): To support a quasi-experimental evaluation of a music instruction program intended for students in low-income elementary schools.
- **Texas Women's University** (Denton, TX): To support a mixed-methods evaluation study of a dance intervention aimed at improving the social and emotional health of adolescents in detention.

NEA Research Labs

Through a series of grants and cooperative agreements, the NEA has established a national program that permits transdisciplinary research teams, grounded in the social and behavioral sciences, to engage with the NEA's five-year research agenda. The [NEA Research Labs](#) program yields empirical insights about the arts for the benefit of arts and non-arts sectors alike.

Each of the *NEA Research Labs* designs a research agenda, conducts a program to implement it, and prepares reports and other products that contribute substantively to a wider understanding of topics of special interest to the NEA as informed by the field. In FY 2023, the NEA announced six research topics corresponding with two priority categories that will be addressed by future Labs:

- **Measuring the Impacts of the Arts:** On U.S. Economic Growth, and/or Innovation; On Cognition and Learning; and, On Health and Wellness for Individuals
- **Monitoring and Improving Systems:** Community Health and/or Revitalization; Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Arts; and, Other Aspects of the Arts Ecology

NEA Research Labs are housed at universities and made up of transdisciplinary teams of researchers. The Labs illustrate not only the significant role that the arts play in advancing our understanding of other fields, but also the effectiveness of diverse teams—including researchers, artists, and arts administrators—working together to produce knowledge.

As part of its Research Labs activities, and in response to findings from the 2020 report, *Arts and Research Partnerships in Practice: Proceedings from the First Summit of the National Endowment for the Arts Research Labs*, NEA also is supporting a technical assistance provider to connect and convene the Labs in FY 2023 and FY 2024, and to assist with promoting their work to relevant stakeholders.

In FY 2023, the NEA awarded \$1.9 million to 14 Research Labs (4 new Labs and 10 renewals of existing labs.) In total, there are currently 28 *NEA Research Labs* across the country.

Examples of Research Lab awards made in FY 2023 include:

- **Boise State University** (Boise, ID): The Place, Arts, and Cultural Systems (PACS) Lab will examine whether and how arts and cultural districts, formally designated geographic areas with a density of cultural offerings, support diversity, equity, and inclusion. The lab's research questions will investigate how such districts can become effective drivers of economic and social change while remaining diverse, inclusive, and equitable places.
- **Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai** (New York, NY): The Assessment of Music Experiences in Navigating Depression (AMEND) lab at Mount Sinai Health System's Louis Armstrong Center for Music and Medicine, in partnership with Carnegie Hall's Weill Music Institute, will measure the social-emotional benefits of music participation

in individual and group settings, specifically for individuals across the lifespan and who have clinical depression.

- **Northeastern University** (Boston, MA): The East Boston Spatial Justice Lab and its partner, Maverick Landing Community Services, will evaluate the arts' role in fostering community healing and social cohesion in East Boston, in addition to the well-being of community residents and their sense of belonging.

Together, the RGA and Research Labs programs fill a critical gap in the national infrastructure for policy-relevant research on arts and cultural topics. These awards often enable proof-of-concept studies and pilot programs that later become eligible for larger-scale research awards from public and private funders. In FY 2023 alone, based on their NEA-supported work, RGA and Lab award recipients produced 14 published articles.

Leadership Initiatives (Detail)

The NEA has a number of high-priority “Leadership Initiatives” within its Promotion of the Arts program. Many of these initiatives revolve around partnerships between the NEA and other entities – not only within the arts sector, but also across the federal government, state and regional agencies, educational institutions, and other public and private organizations. These strategic partnerships integrate arts and culture into the whole of society, enabling all Americans to live artful lives. These initiatives are designed to catalyze lasting impacts for artists, arts organizations and communities, and ensure that NEA-funded activities engage populations reflecting the nation’s demographic, geographic, and socioeconomic diversity.

Summaries of select NEA planned activities and successes in these initiatives, which cut across several of the NEA’s strategic plan goals, are broken out below to demonstrate their connection to the agency’s mission and the level of interest that they garner from policymakers and the public. In 2025, the NEA will sustain and refine further certain of these activities in support of arts and culture in our nation.

Artful Lives: Access and Engagement Activities

Artful Lives is an expansive concept of art and cultural engagement that includes everything from the professional production and presentation of art to art as part of our daily lived experience. This includes opportunities for active arts engagement for all. The ability for all people to live artful lives is a key element of equity and opportunity. The NEA is committed to supporting equitable opportunities for arts participation and practice for all Americans in the United States. A focus on reaching historically underserved communities is embedded across NEA programs such as Grants for Arts Projects, Challenge America, and Our Town. Partnerships and projects in this category focus on addressing and reducing the gap between availability of arts programming and the participation of underserved groups and expanding engagement with underserved communities in a wide range of artistic practices relevant to the communities served, from theater and dance to less recognized artistic fields such as fashion and culinary arts.

Native Arts and Tribal Affairs

The NEA continues to grow investments and partnerships in support of native communities. Areas of exploration include language preservation and revitalization, models and approaches to understanding and healing from the legacy of native boarding schools, and other investments in support of Native arts and culture. As part of this investment, the NEA will establish an Office of Native and Tribal Affairs to ensure appropriate leadership and coordination for the breadth of activities across the agency.

HBCUs, Tribal Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions

The NEA works to establish and cultivate ongoing relationships with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Tribal Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, and their partners to build awareness of the National Endowment for the Arts, to share critical resources and information, and build capacity for successful grants applications to the agency.

Local Arts Agencies

Across the United States, Local Arts Agencies (LAAs) provide a wide range of programs and services to help support and enable arts and culture at the local level in many different kinds of communities including urban, suburban, and rural places. LAAs are intermediaries, serving artists and arts organizations, local residents, visitors, and other community partners. Local arts agencies are critical partners of the NEA, increasing access to the arts by extending federal reach and impact and helping to translate national leadership into local benefit. The NEA provides funding to Local Arts Agencies through two project types: Programming and Subgranting. In FY 2024, the NEA will conduct research to better understand trends impacting local arts agencies. These research findings, in turn, will inform the design of projects undertaken in FY2025 to facilitate leadership development and technical assistance in support of LAA capacity and impact.

ArtsHERE

ArtsHERE, a program operated in partnership with South Arts, will support a range of eligible organizations that have demonstrated a commitment to ensuring equitable access to arts programs and services, with an emphasis on involving historically underserved communities (those whose access to the arts is limited relative to geography, race/ethnicity, socio-economic status, or disability). In addition to funding, grantees will have the opportunity to participate in learning and evaluation activities that support the work of these organizations while also generating insights to strengthen the arts and culture sector and inform future arts funding practices.

Arts Education Partnership

The [*Arts Education Partnership*](#) (*AEP*) is the nation's hub for arts and education leaders, building their leadership capacity to support students, educators, and learning environments through research, reporting, counseling, and convening. *AEP*, which includes more than 200 organizations dedicated to advancing arts education, has been supported by the NEA and the U.S. Department of Education since 1995 and is administered by Education Commission of the States.

In partnership with the Education Commission of the States, *AEP* connects arts research, policy, and practice with stakeholders across the country through research and information dissemination, in-person and virtual dialogue, and technical assistance. The NEA and its partners convene and facilitate meetings of arts education policy, equity, and higher education working groups, to serve as learning and resource-sharing opportunities. Together, they help existing *AEP* partners improve practice, build new effective partnerships, and inform policy through the lenses of equity, and healing and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Blue Star Museums

[Blue Star Museums](#) is a collaboration among the NEA, Blue Star Families, the Department of Defense, and more than 2,000 museums in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico to offer free admission to the nation's active military personnel including National Guard and Reserve and their families from Armed Forces Day through Labor Day. Participating museums include children's museums, fine art museums, history and science museums, and nature centers.

The program provides families an opportunity to enjoy the nation's cultural heritage and learn more about their new communities after completing military moves. It also helps museums improve their community outreach and better serve service members and their families.

Citizens' Institute on Rural Design

[Citizen's Institute on Rural Design](#) (*CIRD*) is a leadership initiative of the NEA in partnership with the Housing Assistance Council. Focusing on communities with populations of 50,000 or less, *CIRD*'s goal is to enhance the quality of life and economic vitality of rural America through planning, design, and creative placemaking. *CIRD* is intended to empower local citizens to capitalize on unique local and regional assets in order to guide the civic development and future design of their own communities. The *CIRD* program goals include:

- Building capacity in rural communities to plan comprehensive revitalization strategies;
- Introducing creative placemaking, arts, culture, and design strategies as drivers of economic development in rural America;
- Facilitating a network of rural communities for idea exchanges and peer learning; and
- Preparing communities to be ready and competitive for state and federal funding opportunities.

The program offers competitive funding to small towns and rural and tribal communities to host a multi-day local community design workshop. *CIRD* workshops bring together local citizens and community leaders to address specific planning, design, and arts-related issues. Workshops and programming have focused on a range of design topics that include creating public or civic spaces, developing recreational trails, adaptive reuse of community buildings, redesigning main street, integrating cultural identity into the built environment, designing quality affordable housing, and more. *CIRD* issues a call for communities to apply to the program with two opportunities for engagement: hosting a local design workshop and/or participation in the design learning cohort. Experts in architecture, landscape architecture, rural planning, creative placemaking, main street revitalization, economic development, transportation, and related fields are engaged to lend expertise at local design workshops and to facilitate training and capacity building through the design learning cohort. Participating communities receive additional support through webinars, peer exchange, and access to design and arts experts that help to advance their community's vision.

For 2023-2024, expanded investment in *CIRD* increased engagement with additional rural communities. Eight rural communities are hosting a local design workshop and 17 communities comprise the design learning cohort. Separately, *CIRD* produces public webinars on the topic of rural design for a broad audience and maintains an active and engaging website, www.rural-design.org that serves as a resource to rural communities across the country. *CIRD* has delivered design assistance to more than 120 rural communities throughout the country since 1991.

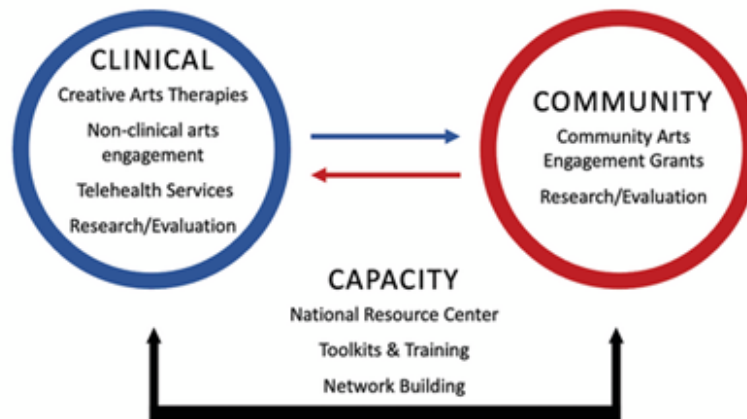
Creative Forces®: NEA Military Healing Arts Network

[*Creative Forces®: NEA Military Healing Arts Network*](#) is an initiative of the NEA in partnership with the U.S. Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs (VA) that seeks to improve the health, well-being, and quality of life for military and veteran populations exposed to trauma, as well as their families and caregivers.

The program places creative arts therapies at the core of patient-centered care at clinical sites throughout the country, including telehealth services, and increases access to community arts activities to promote health, well-being, and quality of life for military service members, veterans, and their families and caregivers. *Creative Forces* is managed in partnership with Civic Arts, the Henry M. Jackson Foundation for the Advancement of Military Medicine, and Mid-America Arts Alliance. The program is building a national network of care and support for trauma-exposed service members, veterans, and their families and caregivers.

It has three components:

- **CLINICAL** – *Creative Forces* is placing creative arts therapies at the core of patient-centered care at military medical facilities, including telehealth delivery of care for patients in rural and remote areas. In clinical settings, creative arts therapists provide art, music, and dance/movement therapies, as well as therapeutic writing instruction, for military patients, veterans, and their families.
- **COMMUNITY** – Since 2017, *Creative Forces* has invested in community arts engagement activities in order to advance our understanding of their benefits and impacts for military and veteran populations exposed to trauma. In 2021, the NEA announced the [Creative Forces Community Engagement grants](#) to support emerging and established non-clinical arts engagement projects designed to promote creative expression, social connectedness, resilience and successful transition to civilian life.
- **CAPACITY** – *Creative Forces* invests in capacity-building efforts, including the development of toolkits, training materials, and other resources to support best practices in serving the target populations. In addition, *Creative Forces* is investing in research on the impacts and benefits—physical, social, and emotional—of these innovative treatment methods.



Creative Forces has supported research and evaluation on how creative arts therapies have helped service members deal with trauma as part of an integrated care model and has published 25 peer reviewed clinical and research journal articles since 2016 on the impacts of these treatments for patients with traumatic brain injuries and associated psychological health issues. Clinical research studies conducted by *Creative Forces* have investigated the impact of creative arts therapies on:

- Recovery from traumatic experiences through meaning-making, positive framing, and verbal processing.
- Reduction of the symptoms associated with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), including flashbacks and nightmares, and interrupted sleep.
- Awareness and tolerance of PTSD/traumatic brain injury (TBI) symptoms such as hypervigilance, pain, and stress.
- Development of healthy independent coping mechanisms through creation of a safe environment and therapist/patient rapport.
- Channeling aggressive behaviors and providing a means to address anger and anxiety through creative expression and improved self-regulation.
- The ability to experience hope and gratification, and increase confidence through strengths-based rehabilitation.
- Reduction of isolation and stigma through meaningful interaction with others and improved communication with family, peers, and providers.

More recently, the program has expanded to include support for trauma-exposed military-connected populations in both clinical and community settings. The NEA currently funds creative arts therapists, equipment, and supplies at 12 clinical sites across the nation, plus telehealth services from multiple sites. Through *Creative Forces*, creative arts therapists are anticipated to provide more than 23,000 clinical encounters, and serve approximately 4,000 new patients every year, with additional reach to rural and remote places provided via the telehealth component.

<i>Creative Forces</i> Clinical Sites	
Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER), Anchorage, AK	G.V. (Sonny) Montgomery VA Medical Center, Jackson, MS
Fort Carson, CO	Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, Jacksonville, NC
James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital, Tampa, FL	VA Northeast Ohio Healthcare System, Cleveland, OH
North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System, Gainesville, FL	Fort Cavazos, TX
Richard L. Roudebush VA Medical Center, Indianapolis, IN	Fort Belvoir, VA
National Intrepid Center of Excellence (NICoE) at Walter Reed, Bethesda, MD	Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Tacoma, WA

The initiative continues agency investments in research on the impacts and benefits—physical, emotional, social, and economic—of creative arts therapies as innovative treatment methods for military and veteran-connected populations who have been exposed to trauma. In 2021, *Creative Forces* funded four feasibility studies focused on two priority research areas: (a) music therapy effects on chronic pain and quality of life and (b) art therapy effects on emotional processing, self-regulation and other symptoms of traumatic stress.

In 2023, *Creative Forces*, made further investments in research initiating a three-year random control trial to test whether a stepped-care, music therapy intervention improves pain, psychological symptoms (anxiety, PTSD, depression, and stress), and health-related quality of life in veterans with chronic musculoskeletal (MSK) pain.

Within the community component of *Creative Forces*, in September 2021, the NEA launched a national subgranting program to support community engagement activities for military and veteran populations that have been exposed to trauma. The grant program is open to any eligible organization from across the country. Through this program, approximately 30 grants per year are awarded. In FY 2024, *Creative Forces* will launch a mixed methods evaluation study to assess the four participant outcome areas of the grant program:

- Creative Expression: Participants have a better understanding of themselves and others by creating or engaging with art.
- Social Connectedness: Participants have supportive relationships in their life and a sense of belonging to a community.
- Resilience: Participants feel they can rebound from stress, unexpected events, or life’s challenges.
- Independence and Successful Adaptation to Civilian Life: Participants have both an individual and shared sense of purpose, as well a positive self-worth, that supports adapting and readjusting to civilian life.

Capacity-building efforts also continue to expand. The Creative Forces National Resource Center was launched in July 2020. The [National Resource Center](#) provides online capacity-building support for the initiative. Features and services of these online support tools will help manage knowledge distribution; support consistent delivery of clinical treatment; coordinate research; facilitate data collection; and support training and collaboration efforts for stakeholders across clinical and community efforts to support our military and veteran-connected populations.

Creative Forces continues to look for ways to expand support for broader military-connected populations who have been exposed to trauma. An expansion of the Creative Forces partnership with the Walter Reed Military Medical Center to include support for patients, families and caregivers at the hospital's Murtha Cancer Center is anticipated to be announced in FY 2024. In addition, the NEA is applying the learnings from Creative Forces programming and resources to launch healing through the arts initiatives as well as exploring ways to deepen its impact with existing Veterans Affairs and Department of Defense partners including exploring application of the Creative Forces model in response to natural disaster and other matters of national significance.

Future of the Field

Across artistic disciplines, the NEA is a national resource that supports arts organizations and public sector partners, facilitating learning and experimentation that helps enable leaders to adapt their programming and business models in response to social, economic, and environmental pressures. *Future of the Field* represents a robust commitment to supporting arts organizations to better understand and address risks that impact their business, such as responding to the impacts of COVID-19 on audience participation, and other factors that pose a threat or opportunity to nonprofit and public sector arts organizations. Through grantmaking and strategic partnerships, the NEA will support arts organizations to convene industry leaders, document best practices, and facilitate knowledge sharing and capacity building to support the sustainability of arts organizations and good jobs in the arts and culture sector.

Interagency Working Group on Arts, Health, and Civic Infrastructure

The NEA and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) are partnering to launch an interagency working group to advance the integration of arts and culture into research and federal programs that improve health outcomes for both individuals and communities, and strengthen the civic infrastructure that is critical to many aspects of community well-being. The working group will officially kick off in FY 2024, bringing together several federal agencies, increasing understanding of how the arts advance health, and enhancing capacity for the adoption of innovative arts and cultural practices within federal funding programs. The group will be co-chaired by NEA and HHS leadership and will invite several federal agencies to participate in quarterly meetings, peer learning opportunities, and public events. The group's primary goal is to identify research gaps and federal funding opportunities that have the potential to engage arts and culture in efforts that lead to healthier communities. The NEA will draw on the insights and partnerships formed through the working group to inform new

research and a pilot initiative on arts, health and civic infrastructure including healing through the arts projects.

This working group builds on the success of a coalition of federal agencies that NEA convened between 2011-2023, as part of the [*Arts and Human Development Task Force*](#), which encouraged more and better research on how the arts can help people reach their full potential at all stages of life.

International Activities

The National Endowment for the Arts brings the benefit of international exchange to arts organizations, artists, and audiences nationwide. The Arts Endowment's international activities increase recognition of the excellence of U.S. arts around the world and broaden the scope of experience of American artists, thereby enriching the art they create. Through partnerships with other government agencies and the private sector, the National Endowment for the Arts fosters international creative collaboration by strengthening residency programs of foreign artists in communities across the country. Local citizens as well as the arts community benefit from the lasting international ties that result. In FY 2025 the NEA will continue many of its signature international programs and partnerships, in addition to exploring opportunities to further artistic and cultural exchange. Finally, the NEA's emphasis on global exchange contributes to necessary learning and innovation within the Agency and broader field.

USArtists International

[*USArtists International \(USAI\)*](#), administered through a grant to the Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation, supports performances by U.S. artists at impactful international festivals and performing arts marketplaces outside the United States and its jurisdictions. The program supports the engagements of exemplary solo artists and ensembles across all performing arts disciplines including dance, music, theater, multidisciplinary work, and folk/traditional arts.

In 2023, nearly 1,000 American artists travelled abroad with USAI support to more than 33 different countries. In 2024, the NEA will draw on survey data on participant experience and field trends to design an updated program solicitation.

Performing Arts Discovery

The [*Performing Arts Discovery \(PAD\)*](#) program promotes U.S. performing artists to international programmers, festival directors, and venue managers. PAD is administered through a grant to WESTAF and aims to expand international markets and generate overseas touring opportunities for U.S. performing artists.

Performing Arts Global Exchange (PAGE)

[*Performing Arts Global Exchange \(PAGE\)*](#) brings exemplary international music, dance, and theater to audiences across the United States. Administered through a grant to Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation, PAGE offers fee support grants to nonprofit presenting venues and units of state,

local, or tribal government based anywhere in the U.S. or its jurisdictions that book artists from a curated roster. Artists on the roster have not widely toured in the United States and reside in a selected region; the 2025 roster is anticipated to feature artists from Brazil and Columbia.

U.S.-Japan Creative Artist Fellowship Program

The [U.S.-Japan Creative Artist Fellowship Program](#) provides three- to five-month residencies in Japan for up to five individual creative artists in any discipline. While in Japan, artists work on an individual project which may include the creation of new work or pursuit of their individual artistic goals. To take advantage of the [2025 Osaka World Expo](#), our approach will be slightly different. JUSFC and the Arts Endowment will select up to five U.S.-Japan artistic teams. The selected American artists will team with a Japanese artist to collaborate on a project that will reflect the themes of the 2025 World Expo. The completed projects will be showcased in Osaka over the course of the Expo dates.

Federal Advisory Committee on International Exhibitions (FACIE)

In partnership with the State Department, the NEA convenes a Federal Advisory Committee on International Exhibitions (FACIE) panel that makes recommendations for official U.S. presentations at the Venice Visual Arts and Architecture Biennials. The Venice Biennale is one of the most prestigious cultural institutions in the world with more than 500,000 visitors yearly. The State Department just announced that Jeffrey Gibson will be the American artist representing the United States between April 20, 2024-November 24, 2024. Gibson will be the first Native American to exhibit at the Biennale.

International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies (IFACCA)

The NEA coordinates programming with the International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies (IFACCA), a global network of arts councils, ministries of culture and government agencies representing more than 70 countries that advance arts and culture. IFACCA is an important forum for exchange and learning in support of strengthening cultural ecosystems that contribute to vibrant, sustainable and inclusive societies. In May 2023, NEA Chair Jackson participated in International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies' (IFACCA) [9th World Summit on Arts & Culture](#) in Stockholm, Sweden.

Arts & Artifacts Indemnity Program

The NEA's Museums Office administers the U.S. government's *Arts and Artifacts Indemnity Program* on behalf of the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities. The Indemnity Program was created by Congress in 1975 for the purpose of minimizing the costs of insuring domestic and international exhibitions for U.S. nonprofit museums and organizations.

Other International Activities

The NEA also works with other federal agencies and international organizations in order to strengthen global diplomatic ties in the cultural sphere. For example, the NEA's Office of

International Activities (OIA) coordinates activity with the U.S. Department of State, especially to connect U.S.-based arts organizations with cultural attachés. Additionally, the OIA is a key point of contact for international cultural visitors from the State Department's International Visitors Leadership Program. OIA works with the State Department's Foreign Service Institute to educate new cultural attaché officers about the NEA before they head to various U.S. Embassy posts.

Other activities include partnerships to carry out key global events that help to bolster the work of U.S. artists. Examples include participation in the World Expo (mentioned above) and the [Festival Internacional Cervantino](#), a festival which takes place each fall in the city of Guanajuato, located in central Mexico. The festival originates from the mid-20th century and has grown to become the most important international artistic and cultural event in Mexico and Latin America, and one of four major events of its type in the world.

Mayors' Institute on City Design

[*Mayors' Institute on City Design*](#) (*MICD*) is a leadership initiative of the NEA in partnership with the United States Conference of Mayors. Since 1986, the Mayors' Institute has helped transform communities through design by preparing mayors to be the chief urban designers of their cities. *MICD* achieves its mission by organizing sessions where mayors engage leading design and development experts to find solutions to the most critical planning and design challenges facing their cities. By helping mayors address design challenges, *MICD* has helped cities across the country lead the way to substantive improvements in everything from public spaces to transportation to economic mobility.

Every year, *MICD* plans and manages up to five sessions held throughout the country. Participation in each two-and-one-half-day session is limited to no more than eight mayors and eight preeminent design and development professionals, along with *MICD* partners. Sessions are organized around case study projects. Each mayor presents a project from their city and receives feedback from other mayors and design professionals. Many complex design topics have been addressed in recent years including downtown and neighborhood revitalization, transportation planning, creative placemaking, district visioning and branding, main street and commercial corridor redevelopment, affordable housing, historic preservation, and sustainable development. Following each presentation, mayors and design professionals identify important issues, offer suggestions, and discuss potential solutions. The interchange sparks lively debates, generates new ideas, and inspires creative thinking.

Just City Mayoral Fellowship, a collaboration with the United States Conference of Mayors and the Just City Lab at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, launched in Fall of 2020. Using the *MICD* model, the program brings together eight mayors and a range of design experts over the course of nine weeks to directly tackle racial injustices in each of their cities through planning and design visioning and interventions.

Additional *MICD* offerings have included direct technical assistance support for mayors and their planning staff, along with a series of virtual seminars that cover timely topics such as designing streets for pandemic response and recovery, and monuments—reckoning with the past

and envisioning the future. *MICD* offers mayors an intimate space to learn from each other and the nations' leading design experts on ways to tackle pressing and timely design challenges. In 2023, *MICD* invested in developing curricula, case studies, and other resources for mayors to engage arts and culture more deeply in advancing their vision for their city.

With the dual goals of educating mayors about design and educating design professionals about the practical needs of American cities, the program has graduated more than 1,200 mayors and engaged more than 750 designers.

Musical Theater Songwriting Challenge

The [*Musical Theater Songwriting Challenge*](#) is a national contest for high school students with a passion for musical theater songwriting and for the wide range of musical styles represented in contemporary musicals. The goal of the program is to develop the next generation of songwriters, increasing access to the field by students from a broad range of backgrounds. Working alone or in collaboration with another student, contestants are challenged to create the lyrics and music for an original song that could appear in a musical theater show. Students entering the challenge will have the opportunity to engage in musical songwriting workshops with professional songwriters, and students whose songs are selected as the winning entries will participate in one-on-one songwriting mentorships to continue developing their songs with professional musical theater artists, as well as experience their original song performed by professional musicians and singers for an audience. Since its launch in 2017, more than 1,000 students have participated in the program.

National Folklife Network

The National Folklife Network (NFN), administered in partnership with Southwest Folklife Alliance, Inc., is an initiative to bolster the folk & traditional arts field through training, fieldwork, convenings, community collaborations, and cultural asset mapping. Designed to address significant gaps in the map of national arts funding for the folk & traditional arts, NFN prioritizes work in seven regions with are the rural areas of Northern Plains, Southern Plains, Rocky Mountain West, and Alaska, and the urban centers of Memphis, Tennessee, San Juan Puerto Rico, and Washington DC.

A cohort was established in each of the seven regions, consisting of an anchor organization as well as related organizations and individuals, including but not limited to folk & traditional arts organizations, tribal communities or tribes, minority-serving institutions, federally-designated post-secondary institutions (e.g., HBCUs and Tribal Colleges & Universities), colleges and universities, and artists. Consultative services, training, and logistical support will continue to be provided to the *NFN* regional cohorts on topics such as capacity building, financial management, general administration, fieldwork, archiving, cultural asset mapping, and fundraising. Additionally, technical assistance for federal, state, and regional funding opportunities will be promoted and provided as appropriate, and best practices will be identified and shared within and among the regional cohorts. An *NFN* website will also be developed and maintained.

NEA Big Read

The [*NEA Big Read*](#) broadens our understanding of our world, our communities, and ourselves through the joy of reading, writing, and sharing stories. The initiative supports the annual selection of nonprofit organizations around the country to host dynamic community-wide programs, each designed around *NEA Big Read*-selected poems, short stories, novel excerpts, essays and/or other pieces of literature that explore the meaning of “community” through the lens of its people, environment, history, and future.

Arts Midwest has managed the *NEA Big Read* grants program since its inception in 2006. Following the final cooperative agreement renewal in FY 2023, the agreement is being recompeted in FY 2024 through a new NEA program solicitation.

Each community program that receives an NEA Big Read grant—which generally ranges between \$5,000 and \$20,000—is provided with resources, outreach materials, and training on various aspects such as working with local partners, developing public relations strategies, and leading discussions and Q&As. The program may last as short as a week or as long as several months and can include a kick-off event; group discussions about the selected literary works; community writing workshops; activities related to collecting and sharing oral/written stories from members of the community; and projects that engage the community and/or respond creatively to community stories and/or the selected literary works (e.g., art exhibitions, theatrical and/or musical performances, and poetry slams.). As the program evolves it will retain an emphasis on programming that is responsive to local interests and increasing the opportunities for writing workshops.

Poetry Out Loud

A partnership of the NEA, the Poetry Foundation, and the state arts agencies, [*Poetry Out Loud*](#) is a national arts education program that encourages the study of great poetry by offering free educational materials and a dynamic recitation competition for high school students across the country. This program helps students master public speaking skills, build self-confidence, and learn about literary history and contemporary life. Since the program began in 2005, more than 4.3 million students and 76,000 teachers from 19,000 schools across the country have participated in Poetry Out Loud.

Shakespeare in American Communities

[*Shakespeare in American Communities*](#) is a theater program that inspires students nationwide with live performances of Shakespeare’s plays. Arts Midwest has managed Shakespeare in American Communities since its inception in 2003. Annually, selected theater companies receive competitive grants to support performances and educational activities. These funds have enabled theater companies to offer more performances to schools and reach more students. They have expanded the geographic reach of their touring programs, and provided improved access to the arts for underserved schools, with particular impact experienced in rural communities. In FY24 the NEA will select a cooperator to continue the Shakespeare in American Communities and Shakespeare in American Communities: Juvenile Justice program component. The FY24

solicitation will also include some important modifications. These modifications include the prioritization of support to rural communities, the addition of a Next Gen program component, and the creation of a learning community described in more detail below.

Shakespeare in American Communities: Juvenile Justice, a program component, enables theater companies and organizations to engage youths within the juvenile justice system with the works of Shakespeare through theater education programs nationwide. Theater companies and organizations across the nation partner with the juvenile justice system to reach youths through juvenile facilities or detention centers, educational schools/programs specifically for juvenile offenders or incarcerated youths, court-appointed programs, short- or long-term treatment centers, and transition centers. A growing body of research indicates that arts programs in justice facilities can help reduce recidivism rates, increase self-esteem, and improve social interactions and emotional health.

Shakespeare in American Communities: Next Gen, a program component that supports paid apprenticeships for early and mid-career theater administrators and technicians at theaters and arts organizations who participate in Shakespeare in American Communities collaborative projects described above, or projects developed with a non-arts organization or group that aims to address a specific problem using theater-based interventions, such as programs [working with houseless populations to make theater](#), [bringing theater to hospital settings](#), teaching playwrighting to incarcerated individuals, [collaborating with young people in urban communities](#). The *Next Gen* focus addresses important needs in the theater field and aims to leverage the success of Shakespeare in American Communities to expand access to theater opportunities and create new workforce opportunities

Learning Communities: Learning communities will be comprised of individuals and organizations involved in the grant program. The Learning Community experience will consist of a set number of virtual gatherings and will culminate in a capstone, in-person convening. The learnings will be documented and distributed for field-wide use.

Sound Health Network

The NEA's *Sound Health Network* (SHN) is a partnership of the NEA with the University of California, San Francisco in collaboration with the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, and Renée Fleming, the center's artistic advisor. The SHN was established to promote research and public awareness about the impact of music on health and wellness. A national resource center, SHN regularly hosts webinars for the public, issues newsletters, maintains a clearinghouse of research articles, and connects and convenes researchers, musicians, music therapists, and others to improve access to knowledge at this bustling intersection.

SHN aims to expand knowledge and understanding of how listening to, performing, or creating music involves intricate circuitry in the brain that can be harnessed for health and wellness applications in daily life; explore ways to enhance the potential for music as therapy for neurological disorders; identify future opportunities for research; and create public awareness about how the brain functions and interacts with music.

- In FY 2023, SHN conducted public webinars on topics such as the relationship between music and early childhood development, education, community well-being, and pain relief—including pain management for sickle cell disease patients. Through virtual conferencing software, SHN also hosted a series of “Live Days” for “affinity groups” of students, researchers, music organizations, and music therapists to convene and explore topics such as integrative health and music, music and cognition, and music services reimbursement. Throughout the year, SHN expanded its online directory of researchers and practitioners and its clearinghouse of research publications while continuing to distribute original content through newsletters and social media. In addition, SHN presented at many arts-and-health-related sessions and conferences, including the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts’ “Sound Health: Renew/Remix” two-day event, for which the SHN provided technical assistance.
- *Sound Health*, a separate partnership between the John F. Kennedy Performing Arts Center and the NIH, in association with the NEA, promotes research and public awareness about the potential impact of music on neuroscience, health, and well-being. In partnership with NIH, the NEA supports research grants on “Music and Health.” In December 2023, the NIH and NEA will cosponsor a two-day research workshop on “Music and Medicine,” showcasing the work of principal investigators that have been supported to date, and exploring topics such as music education and its relationship to health outcomes.

A Focus on Strategic Partnerships

Through the Office of Partnerships, Expansion, and Innovation, the NEA coordinates federal and philanthropic partnerships to offer new opportunities that expand artistic practice in our nation and support the integration of the arts into strategies, policies, and programs that advance the economic development, well-being, and resilience of all communities, especially historically underserved communities. The NEA’s approach to federal and philanthropic partnerships is one of several key strategies the agency uses to fulfill its mission and deliver on the directive outlined in Executive Order #14084, “*Promoting the Arts, the Humanities, and Museum and Library Services*”. Additionally, these partnerships enable more opportunities for all Americans to engage in cultural experiences and to celebrate the diversity of our nation. The following are highlights of a few of the strategic interagency partnerships, which demonstrate the value of the arts more broadly across a wide-range of governmental activities:

- In FY 2023, the NEA partnered with the National Science Foundation (NSF) by co-supporting a second workshop on the arts’ integration with computer science research and education. The agencies also co-supported an evaluation of NSF computer science education projects that incorporate artistic methods and practices.
- In FY 2022, the NEA, Centers for Disease Control, and CDC Foundation entered into an agreement supporting a CDC Foundation grant program called “Engaging the Arts to Build Vaccine Confidence,” which enabled 30 organizations to work at the intersection of the arts and public health during the height of the pandemic. In 2023, CDC Foundation

released an impact report to capture the ways in which arts and cultural organizations can help to prepare for public health crises in the future.

- The NEA and General Services Administration continue to collaborate to increase awareness of GSA's Art in Architecture program and to promote federal art commission opportunities for artists that reflect the diversity of communities across the nation.
- With the Bureau of Economic Analysis, the NEA continues to update and publish national and state-level statistics about the arts and cultural economy. This partnership enables the NEA to publish reports that measures the total economic output for arts and cultural industries and goods and services, as well as total employment and compensation numbers for workers in those industries. It also tallies consumer spending on arts and culture and import/export activity; enabling researchers, policy-makers, and industry groups to monitor trends in arts and cultural production.
- In FY 2023, the NEA partnered with the U.S. Department of Education (National Center for Education Statistics) to add an arts component to the High School & Beyond longitudinal study. The High School & Beyond study will help educators, parents, researchers, and policymakers better understand the ways that art education contributes to student success. Information collected through the study also can be used to improve high school educational experiences for this generation and beyond.
- The NEA and Appalachian Regional Commission partnered on the [*Appalachian Gateway Communities Initiative*](#). Both agencies have been collaborating on this program since 2004 to help small and rural communities develop thoughtful strategies around promoting nature, arts, and culture for economic growth; celebrating some of Appalachia's most treasured assets and supporting communities experiencing economic distress and transition.
- The NEA continues to participate actively in interagency working groups and coordinating committees such as those convened by the HHS-led Equitable Long-Term Recovery and Resilience (ELTRR) initiative, the White House's Office of Science & Technology Policy, and the Office of the Surgeon General.
- The NEA partners with the National Park Service, Institute for Museum and Library Services, and National Endowment for the Humanities on the [*Save America's Treasures*](#) grant program. Save America's Treasures preserves nationally significant historic properties and collections that convey our nation's rich heritage to future generations.

In FY 2024 and FY 2025, the NEA will continue to develop partnerships with federal agencies, philanthropic entities, and others in order to strengthen the connection between the arts and other sectors enabling broader access and benefit to the arts. NEA is a national resource and convener of key conversations on arts and culture across the federal government and the broader field. In January 2024, the NEA will co-host with the Domestic Policy, *Healing, Bridging, Thriving: A Summit on Arts and Culture in our Communities*. This national summit will bring together leaders from across sectors, including government officials; policymakers; artists; academics;

philanthropic, labor, and community leaders; and the public, to consider the ideas, policies, and actions available to better integrate and elevate the arts and humanities throughout our country.

State and Regional Partnerships (Detail)

Program Activity (\$000)	FY 2023 Enacted	FY 2024	FY 2025 Request
	64,980	TBD	65,840

Program Activity (\$000)	FY 2023 Actual Obligations	FY 2024	FY 2025 Request
State and Regional Partnerships			
Basic Plan Support	51,143		51,816
Underserved	<u>13,841</u>		<u>14,024</u>
subtotal	64,984	TBD	65,840

Summary:

The NEA requests an FY 2025 funding level of \$65.84 million for the agency’s State and Regional Partnership Program.

Background

Forty percent of the NEA’s grantmaking dollars are awarded to the nation’s 56 state and jurisdictional arts agencies (SAAs), six regional arts organizations (RAOs), and a national service organization through annual partnership agreements. Partnership funds are matched by state resources on at least a one-to-one basis, with the partial exception of certain funds provided to U.S. jurisdictions, and the ability to seek specific waivers. This approach leverages the NEA’s resources by catalyzing arts projects in thousands of communities across the country and allowing the NEA to build and sustain local arts capacity for planning, programming, evaluation, and communications.

State Partnership Agreements

Since the mid-1960s, the NEA has fostered and encouraged the creation and expansion of SAAs. Today, agencies exist in all 50 states and 6 U.S. jurisdictions. Through Partnership Agreements with SAAs, the NEA is able to extend its reach to every community in the United States, translating national leadership into local benefit.

Regional Partnership Agreements

The RAOs are private, nonprofit entities created by state arts leaders in the mid-1970s to facilitate the exchange of artists across state borders. The National Endowment for the Arts encouraged development of the RAOs to cultivate the touring of artists to sparsely populated and

underserved areas of the country. Since that time, the six RAOs have evolved to play a major role in strengthening the effectiveness and efficiency of the U.S. arts infrastructure, by cultivating public and private resources; working collaboratively across state, national, and international borders; and delivering programming across all disciplines.

National Services Partnership Agreements

National service organizations provide leadership, training, planning, coordination, and information services to support SAAs and RAOs. In FY 2025, the NEA anticipates continuing its National Services Partnership Agreement with the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA), who provides arts leadership services nationwide.

FY 2025 Request

The NEA requests an FY 2025 funding level of \$65.84 million to maintain the agency's State and Regional Partnership Program. The activities anticipated to be undertaken in FY 2025 are substantially similar to those activities currently underway in FY 2024.

FY 2024 Activities

- **Partnership Agreements**: Applications requesting FY 2024 support will be submitted by SAAs and RAOs in October 2023. The NEA anticipates once again supporting all 50 state arts agencies, six jurisdictional arts agencies, six regional arts organizations, and a national service organization with funding for programming and activities that supports both locally-identified priorities and NEA strategies.
- **Cooperative Agreements**: Cooperative agreements with service providers will further the work of the NEA in FY 2024, including renewal of an existing cooperative agreement with NASAA to support research and leadership development services relevant to state arts agencies, jurisdictional arts agencies, and regional arts organizations.
- **Field Development**: FY 2024 will build on important recent field developments relative to the relationship between jurisdictional arts agencies and regional arts organizations. FY22 marked the first time that all jurisdictional arts agencies are represented by membership with regional arts organization. Regional arts organization membership will continue to provide additional technical assistance and programmatic resources to these jurisdictional arts agencies. FY 2024 also will see programming by RAOs further recognize the importance of artist-centered engagement, through an expanded focus of what has historically been called the Regional Touring Program.

FY 2023 Accomplishments/Activities

- FY 2023 State Partnership Agreements provided support for the planning and implementation of locally-determined priorities, identified through each state's strategic planning process. In addition, Partnership Agreements provided funding for arts education activities that address the NEA's arts education goals; arts programming in

underserved communities, as identified by each state; and folk and traditional arts projects that strengthen the traditional arts and cultural heritage of states, thereby helping to preserve the diverse cultural heritage of the nation.

- FY 2023 Regional Partnership Agreements provided support for the planning and implementation of locally-determined priorities, identified through each RAO's strategic planning process. In addition, Partnership Agreements provided funding for projects and programs enhancing public engagement with the arts with an emphasis on reaching underserved communities; folk and traditional arts projects that strengthen the traditional arts and cultural heritage of regions, thereby helping to preserve the diverse cultural heritage of the nation; and professional development training for accessibility.
- In FY 2023, local priorities for both SAAs and RAOs focused on continued recovery from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, both on arts agencies and their constituents. Relatedly, a growing area of focus in the field is leveraging the capacity of artists and arts organizations to help strengthen the health, wellbeing, and economic vitality of communities through cross-sector work with other fields (such as education, health, and transportation).
- Annual Partnership Agreements include the ability for grantees to subgrant federal funds, successfully furthering the reach of federal dollars. Work also continued to emphasize issues surrounding access, diversity, inclusion, and equity. For SAAs, additional priorities included efforts to expand community engagement, especially in underserved communities; and community and economic development, arts education, and lifelong learning. For RAOs, additional priorities included: work related to the support and presentation of performing arts, as well as training and resources related to accessibility.

The following graphic provides additional details on the NEA’s grantmaking in FY 2023.



2023 GRANTMAKING

\$160.10 Million Awarded through 2,900 Grants[†]



*Includes Grants for Arts Projects and Research Grants in the Arts

[†] Includes Jazz Masters and National Heritage Fellowships

As of September 30, 2023

Program Support

Program Support activities include: grant application review, research and analysis projects, outreach, production of various agency publications, travel for members of the National Council on the Arts (NCA), arts accessibility activities, contractual services, and assessments for E-Government initiatives. These activities support grantmaking and programmatic activities and are ways in which the NEA shows up as a thought leader, purveyor of information, and facilitator of public discourse around arts and culture. These functions are essential and enable the NEA to maximize its impact as a federal agency in support of the arts sector.

Program Activity (\$000)	FY 2023 Enacted	FY 2024	FY 2025 Request
	2,500	TBD	2,500

Program Activity (\$000)	FY 2023 Actual Obligations	FY 2024	FY 2025 Request
Program Support			
Panels and Reviewers	341		425
Consultants	51		62
Printing and Reproduction	49		52
Travel	43		74
Research and Analysis	1,396		1,097
Accessibility	1		23
Other Services	330		349
Grants.gov Assessment	<u>330</u>		<u>418</u>
Total	2,541	TBD	2,500

FY 2023 excludes reimbursable funding and use of gift funds; includes the use of available funds carried over from prior years.

The three primary drivers of Program Support are:

Panels and Reviewers: \$425,000 is requested for panelist and reviewer compensation, the same amount as projected for FY 2024. This amount is based on the need for more panelists as a result of the continued growth in the number of grant applications that the agency has been receiving.

Research and Analysis: The NEA requests \$1.1 million to support research and analysis activities primarily led by the Office of Research and Analysis (ORA), approximately the same amount as projected for FY 2024. Among projects expected to be undertaken in FY 2025 are development of research reports, tools, and datasets as part of the National Arts Statistics & Evidence Reporting Center, and the National Archive of Data on Arts & Culture; execution of key Leadership Initiatives such as the Interagency Working Group on Arts, Health, and Civic Infrastructure; and new research studies as part of the five-year research agenda.

Grants.gov Assessment: The NEA projects that the annual fee charged by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) for the NEA's use of Grants.gov will increase by \$21,000 from \$397,000 to \$418,000, based on the five-year rolling average assessment calculation of the NEA's grantmaking activities.

The NEA requests \$2.5 million in FY 2025 for the following Program Support activities:

- Panels and Reviewers. \$425,000 is requested for panelist and reviewer compensation, the same amount as projected for FY 2024, which is based on the need for more panelists as a result of the continued growth in the number of grant applications that the agency recently has been receiving. As required by law, the NEA engages expert advisors to review grant applications, which enhances the credibility, transparency, and fairness of the review system.
- Consultants. \$62,000 is requested to support expert consultants' participation at convenings on arts topics, and review of manuscripts submitted as part of the *NEA Literature Fellowships* application review process.
- Printing and Reproduction. \$52,000 is requested for the production of publications that directly relate to the arts fields, including brochures about agency grant opportunities.
- Travel. \$74,000 is requested to support travel for NCA members, recipients of the National Medal of Arts, and individuals participating at convenings, symposia, and meetings.
 - Members of the NCA (composed of up to 18 voting members) typically meet three times per year to advise the NEA Chair on agency policies, grant applications, and the funding of specific projects. In FY 2025, they are anticipated to meet twice in person and once virtually. They also travel to attend working groups and other agency meetings and functions.
 - The NEA's request also funds travel for recipients of the *National Medal of Arts* to receive their awards at the White House should a ceremony be held in FY 2025. Created by Congress in 1984, the *National Medal of Arts* is conferred annually by the President to honor persons and organizations that have made extraordinary contributions to the excellence, support, growth, and availability of the arts in the United States.
 - In addition, the NEA anticipates inviting a limited number of individuals to travel at the request of the NEA to participate at convenings, symposia, and meetings on various arts topics.
- Research and Analysis. The NEA requests \$1.1 million in Program Support funds for research and analysis. The NEA's Office of Research and Analysis (ORA) produces unique data sets to the public and analyses and reports that provide important insights into public policy issues affecting artists, arts organizations, and arts audiences and

participants. Funding in this area also supports activities essential to implement the goals, objectives, and performance measurements reflected in the agency's Strategic Plan and Performance Plan.

- ORA-produced datasets include the Arts Basic Survey (ABS) and the Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA), both conducted in partnership with the U.S. Census Bureau; and the Arts Module of the General Social Survey (GSS), supported in partnership with the National Science Foundation. The NEA makes these datasets publicly available, along with other arts-related data and data tools, through its [National Archive of Data on Arts & Culture](#) (NADAC), a free online repository for researchers, practitioners, and policy-makers.
- Program Support funding also will be used to initiate new studies as part of the NEA's five-year Research Agenda and the agency's FY 2024 Learning Agenda; sustain a National Statistics and Evidence Reporting Center and a technical assistance provider for the NEA's Research Labs program; and create and maintain interactive maps and dashboards based on NEA grants data—a priority of the agency's Data Governance Board.
- To facilitate strategic partnerships and information sharing, the NEA, the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), and the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) will develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that will enable each agency's respective research offices to work together to expand public knowledge about the arts and cultural sector and the impacts of these federal funding agencies. The MoU also would permit the agencies to work together in testing and evaluating methods, tools, and data-driven strategies that can inform each agency's Equity Action Plan. In addition, a more robust research-and-data partnership across the three cultural agencies will position them more effectively to respond to the objectives of the Federal Data Strategy, which calls for leveraging data as a strategic asset.
- Accessibility. The agency goal of increasing access to the arts for all Americans is achieved, in part, by addressing grantee compliance with Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act and the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The \$23,000 requested will support symposia, workshops, and panels that address accessibility issues.
- Other Services. \$349,000 is requested for contractual services supporting programs, projects, and initiatives as well as the *National Medal of Arts*; the costs associated with panel operations; negotiation and approval of indirect cost rates for nonprofit organizations and non-Federal organizations; and efforts to enhance public access to and knowledge about the agency's activities, such as production of agency publications, online content, and webcasts made available to the arts field and general public.
- Assessment for Grants.gov. The Grants.gov initiative is part of the overall E-Government program for improving access to government services via the internet. The

charter of Grants.gov calls for establishing a simple, unified electronic storefront for interactions between grant applicants and the Federal agencies that manage grant funds. Grants.gov allows organizations to find and apply electronically for competitive grant opportunities from all Federal grantmaking agencies. As one of 26 Federal grantmaking agencies, the NEA is assessed an annual fee for use of Grants.gov, which is paid to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the managing partner for Grants.gov. \$418,000 is requested for the FY 2025 Grants.gov assessment.

FY 2024 Activities

Research and Analysis. In FY 2024, the NEA will launch a national indicators framework and schedule for the prompt and regular reporting of arts-related statistics to the public. Development of the framework and metrics has been undertaken by a research contractor, in consultation with a Technical Working Group of arts practitioners, funders, and researchers. The NEA also plans to publish the results from additional analyses of the 2022 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts, the Arts Module of the 2022 General Social Survey, and the Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Account. Technical documentation also will be provided for these datasets, which have been collected in partnership with other federal agencies.

Other FY 2024 research activities will include an ongoing evaluation of the NEA's ArtsHERE program (Equity Program) and two national studies: one focused on local arts agencies (LAAs) and their needs and roles within the larger U.S. arts ecology; and another seeking to map arts and cultural assets and opportunities within Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Beyond these projects, NEA will support the launch of the Interagency Working Group on Arts, Health and Civic Infrastructure and publish research briefs based on analyses of arts variables in longitudinal datasets maintained by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics. In FY 2024, NEA also will pursue an agreement with the World Health Organization to permit joint publications and co-convenings about the arts' relationship to health and well-being.

Quality Grant Application Review. All grant applications to the NEA are reviewed on the basis of artistic excellence and artistic merit, as required by the agency's authorizing legislation. Applications generally receive three levels of review. First, they are reviewed by independent, national panels of artists and art experts. Panels make recommendations that are forwarded to the National Council on the Arts (NCA). The NCA, the NEA's advisory body, comprises nationally and internationally renowned artists, distinguished scholars, and arts patrons appointed by the President, and members of Congress (who serve *ex officio*). Per the NEA's authorizing legislation, "*in making such appointments, the President shall give due regard to equitable representation of women, minorities, and individuals with disabilities who are involved in the arts and shall make such appointments so as to represent equitably all geographical areas in the United States.*" The NCA reviews and makes recommendations on the applications. Those recommendations for funding are sent to the NEA Chair. The Chair reviews those applications and makes final decisions on all grant awards.

The NEA's application review process relies on the assistance of citizen experts who serve as panelists and consultants; their membership must comply with the agency's authorizing

legislation which includes ensuring “that all panels are composed, to the extent practicable, of individuals reflecting a wide geographic, ethnic, and minority representation as well as individuals reflecting diverse artistic and cultural points of view.” To achieve this mandate, the NEA carefully tracks the characteristics of each panel, including the percentage of new versus returning panelists, representation from people of color, sex/gender balance, and geographic diversity. The NEA also ensures that panelists bring diverse points of view to the grant application review process, as evidenced by factors such as their experience in the arts, education and/or work experience, and other professional activities. At the end of each year, the NEA analyzes its achievements in these areas. Panels contribute significantly to the Chair’s funding decisions. For review of FY 2024 applications, the NEA anticipates that approximately 800 citizen experts will review approximately 7,100 grant applications.

Since 2014, 100 percent of the NEA’s panels have occurred virtually rather than in-person and yielded the same level of quality results at considerable cost-savings. Further, through the use of an electronic application review system, the NEA has enhanced its application review process by enabling applicants to upload their application material electronically; panelists to review application material (including work samples), score, and comment online in advance of panel meetings; and, staff to use new tools for the application process and the management of panel meetings. Panelists thoroughly review all applications, have quality discussions, and recommend applications of high artistic excellence and merit for funding. Panelists and NEA staff are overwhelmingly satisfied with the quality of virtual grant application review.

Virtual panels also result in other practical benefits: meeting planning is streamlined; the agency’s pool of potential panelists is expanded; and, staff and panelists have more time to focus on application review. Additionally, use of virtual panels and the processes and procedures put in place aided the NEA significantly during the pandemic.

In alignment with the agency’s engagement efforts, NEA is exploring solutions to support communities that may have limited access to internet.

FY 2023 Accomplishments/Activities

Research and Analysis. In FY 2023, ORA published interactive data tools, maps, fact-sheets, and research briefs about arts participation in 2020, and the arts’ economic impact in 2021. These resources included the release of datasets that the NEA created in partnership with the U.S. Census Bureau and the Bureau of Economic Analysis, respectively. In addition to its own production of research briefs and data tables, ORA prepared and contributed 12 arts-related datasets and/or catalogue listings to the National Archive of Data on Arts & Culture (NADAC). In particular, through NADAC, ORA released quarterly issues of *Arts Research Quarterly* – a round-up of recent journal articles – and hosted two public webinars: one on a statistical profile of arts incubators in the U.S., and the other about analyzing arts and cultural data from large-scale health, education, and labor studies. Throughout the year, moreover, ORA published monthly blog posts and podcasts highlighting notable studies and arts research-related developments for the general public.

Separately, through ORA, the NEA Partnered with the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to co-host “Music as Medicine: The Science and Clinical Practice,” a two-day workshop that was also livestreamed, bringing together researchers supported by the NEA and NIH to present study findings and explore new pathways for understanding music’s relationships to health and neuroscience.

Effective Outreach to the Public. Outreach is a critically important strategy for all agency goals. Through the Program Support account, our outreach efforts focus primarily on the use of our website, the production and distribution of materials, and the use of social media as vehicles for communication. We support outreach intended to educate applicants, grantees, and the general public. Additionally, we provide technical assistance that encourages accessibility in arts programming for older adults, veterans, people with disabilities, and people who reside in institutions. In FY 2023, the agency continued its engagement with communities nationwide and finding ways to build trust and long-lasting relationships with communities whose access to NEA funding, programming, and resources has been limited by ethnicity, geography, economics, and disability.

Examples of accomplishments include:

- Providing up-to-date information on the arts and the NEA on our website, such as the [National Endowment for the Arts blog](#), that highlights how the arts strengthen and promote the well-being and resilience of neighborhoods and towns across America; [podcast interviews](#) with prominent artists and arts organizations providing access and engagement with the arts in communities nationwide; and by webcasting live events such as the NEA Jazz Masters awards ceremony and concert, the Poetry Out Loud National Finals high school recitation competition, and public meetings of the National Council on the Arts. The NEA also continues to maintain an [online grant search](#) tool that allows the public to search all of the NEA’s grants since 1998.
- Expanding the use of webinars to interact with the public. Webinars cover a wide variety of subjects, from grant workshops, to press conferences, to NEA research efforts, to presentations on topics of interest to both the agency and its constituents. Recent webinars include:
 - Grant guideline workshops, with presentations by NEA staff followed by question and answer sessions. The NEA also targeted underserved communities with webinars such as [Grants for Tribes and Native Serving Organizations](#) on June 5, 2023.
 - In FY 2023, the NEA partnered with the General Services Administration to host a series of [webinars for the arts community on the GSA’s Art in Architecture Program](#). These activities provided information on the program in each area of the country and included a conversation with NEA Chair Maria Rosario Jackson and GSA Administrator Robin Carnahan about the importance of the program to the public.

The use of webinars provides members of the public with an opportunity to communicate directly with and ask questions of the agency, as well as an available resource to share with others and use for future reference. In turn, the NEA is able to interact with more members of the public than it could in a single in-person forum, while also saving travel and meeting costs.

- Producing and distributing materials such as:
 - The [Guide to the National Endowment for the Arts](#), which provides details on the programs and activities that the NEA supports, as well as funding deadlines for the agency's various grant programs.
 - A [brochure](#) that provides a brief overview of the agency and its work.
 - [American Artscape](#), the agency's quarterly magazine featuring interviews with and stories on artists, arts organizations, and arts projects from across the United States.
 - The agency's [Annual Reports](#), highlighting NEA activities during a given fiscal year.
 - The agency newsletter *ArtMatters*, which is sent by email monthly to subscribers, now numbering approximately 30,000, detailing activities of the agency that month. Various discipline offices also send out newsletters on their activities to their constituents.

Using social media: the agency has a presence on X ([Twitter](#)), [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#), [Apple Podcasts](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Instagram](#), all with the goal of helping the NEA share information and stay connected to the public. On YouTube, the public can access information such as video profiles of NEA Jazz Masters, watch films about NEA National Heritage Fellows, and hear students who participated in Poetry Out Loud talk about their experience with the program.

Administration

The NEA’s Administration (Salaries and Expenses) budget provides operating funds essential to the achievement of the mission, goals, and objectives of the NEA. Funds provided for this program activity cover personnel compensation and benefits; staff and invitational travel; rental payments to the General Services Administration (GSA); communications and utilities; contractual services such as training and information technology support, reimbursable interagency agreements with other federal agencies; and the acquisition of supplies and equipment.

Program Activity (\$000)	FY 2023 Enacted	FY 2024	FY 2025 Request
	42,050	TBD	43,000

Program Activity (\$000)	FY 2023 Actual Obligations	FY 2024	FY 2025 Request
Administration (Salaries & Expenses)			
Personnel Compensation	19,590		23,920
Civilian Personnel Benefits	6,578		8,325
Benefits for Former Personnel	<u>0</u>		<u>10</u>
Total Compensation & Benefits	26,168		32,255
Travel & Transportation of Persons	325		389
Transportation of Things	3		5
Rental Payments to GSA	3,029		3,157
Comm., Utilities & Misc. Charges	265		261
Printing and Reproduction	9		20
Other Services	6,642		6,190
Supplies and Materials	27		46
Equipment	869		677
Insurance Claims & Indemnities	<u>0</u>		<u>0</u>
Total Other	11,169		10,745
Total: Salaries and Expenses	37,337	TBD	43,000
FTEs	143	TBD	167

FY 2023 excludes reimbursable funding, use of gift funds, and obligations funded by the American Rescue Plan.

Summary:

Compensation and Benefits: The NEA’s request funds the annualized costs associated with the staff anticipated to be hired in FY 2024 to fill key vacancies and deepen the NEA’s “bench strength”, along with projected government-wide pay and benefits costs increases.

IT Modernization: The FY 2025 request includes funds needed for the NEA to continue its multi-year IT modernization activities and ongoing cyber-security enhancements.

The NEA requests \$43.0 million in FY 2025 for Administration (S&E) for the following cost areas and activities.

- Personnel Compensation and Benefits. Personnel compensation and benefits account for approximately 75 percent of the agency’s S&E budget. The personnel compensation request of \$32.26 million supports 167 FTE. This funding level also covers the estimated 2.0 percent federal employee pay raise for January 2025. (See “[Attracting and Retaining Talented Professionals](#)” section below.)
- Staff and Invitational Travel. \$0.39 million is requested for local and out-of-town travel for staff. This travel amount supports agency outreach efforts, technical assistance to grantees and potential applicants, and travel related to the planning and implementation of the agency’s projects, activities, and initiatives.
- Rent. As discussed above, the NEA is working with GSA on the competitive acquisition of a long-term lease. The \$3.16 million budgeted for rental payments assumes that the NEA will lease space at its current location via a short-term extension through FY 2025.
- Contractual Services and Interagency Agreements. Contractual services obtained from the private sector and interagency agreements with other federal agencies include, but are not limited to, security, training, and various miscellaneous services such as administrative contracts for information technology and financial assistance. The Budget provides \$6.19 million for these purposes. Expenses associated with IT modernization and cybersecurity initiatives are detailed in the “[Commitment to IT Modernization](#)” section below.

The NEA uses contractual services and interagency agreements for a range of activities, such as:

- Personnel support services, such as payroll processing with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and an Employee Assistance Program through the Department of Health and Human Services.
- Support of the financial management information system (Delphi) and e-travel services system (E2) provided under an interagency agreement with the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Enterprise Services Center (ESC).
- Support for an electronic grants management system (eGMS) provided under an interagency agreement with the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) through a strategic partnership.

- Other Operating Expenses. \$1.0 million is requested for other operating services including transportation of things; communications, utilities, and miscellaneous charges; printing; supplies; and equipment (including information technology hardware and software).

Commitment to IT Modernization

The NEA requests funding within its administrative budget for IT resources, including personnel and funding for IT modernization. This includes enhancing the public’s digital experience with the NEA in accordance with the President’s Executive Order on the Safe, Secure, and Trustworthy Development and Use of Artificial Intelligence (Executive Order 14110). The NEA also requests funding for ongoing investments in specific capabilities that protect and defend our systems and information in alignment with the President’s Executive Order on Improving the Nation’s Cybersecurity issued on May 12, 2021.

In FY 2025, the NEA will undertake, among others, the following enhancements:

- Build out the NEA’s Enterprise Architecture Team with contract resources to provide greater insight into the alignment of business processes, data, and technology while identifying areas for automation and improvement.
- Develop and deploy a conversational Chatbot on the arts.gov website to improve NEA customer experiences in alignment with the 21st Century Integrated Digital Experience Act and help quickly and efficiently answer frequently asked questions about the grant application process and the NEA.
- Transition the outsourced security operations center (SOC) to the DOJ’s SOC shared service for 24/7/365 monitoring operations.
- Continue remediation of Plan of Action & Milestones (POAMs) and Vulnerabilities from authorization to operate (ATO) assessments, Audits, and Scans.

In FY 2024, the NEA plans to:

- Procure a Privileged Access Management System to aid in our Zero-Trust Architecture implementation and increase our cybersecurity posture.
- Implement enhanced logging covering Azure Cold and Hot Storage, centralizing the logs in order to perform fast searches and powerful visualizations to monitor key metrics.
- Continue network security upgrades by limiting cross communication between VNETs and Resource Groups, limiting East West Traffic Communication, implementing Zscaler Tunnel 2 on devices, and strengthening ZPA Access policies.

- Deploy PRISM, a web-based, commercial off-the-shelf, procurement and contract management system. This tool will streamline end-to-end procurement, integrating and tracking information from the initiation of the requirement through solicitation and award.
- Move Applicant Portal servers to the MS Azure cloud (completing the NEA's cloud migration).
- Acquire an Enterprise Architecture Repository tool.
- Award a Section 508 contract to assess systems, provide training, and remediate documents.

In FY 2023, the NEA undertook the following projects in support of its continued commitment to cybersecurity and IT modernization:

- Entered an agreement for Security-as-a-Service activities to satisfy FISMA findings and fill gaps where resources are unavailable.
- Awarded a SOC contract to monitor and respond to cyber events in real time.
- Acquired and implemented a cybersecurity document repository that maintains documents and automates cybersecurity documentation workflows for managing POAMs and ATOs.
- Completed the move of the NEA's 'Council Book' to a more secure, cloud-based system and simultaneously making it a public facing application that is integrated with Login.gov and requires multifactor authentication for usage by the agency's council members.
- Began the process to acquire PRISM, a web-based, commercial off-the-shelf, procurement and contract management system.
- Implemented a Cyber Analysis Research and Engineering (CARE) Watch Hub for the agency that provides additional security monitoring, evaluation, and alerts from DHS in order to provide a more secure agency network.
- Contracted with a vendor to provide Zero Trust Architecture project management and implementation.

In addition, the NEA made the following general technology improvements in FY 2023:

- Reviewed the technical infrastructure and began its plan to transition to Internet Protocol Version 6 (IPv6). (Note: 80 percent of the NEA assets are IPv6 compatible.)
- Completed the migration of more than 90 percent of the NEA's servers and file services to MS Azure cloud.
- Acquired and onboarded DocuSign to improve and automate the agency's ability to engage with external collaborators.

Attracting and Retaining Talented Professionals

The NEA's staff, its most valuable asset, is dedicated to the agency's mission of promoting and strengthening the creative capacity of our communities by providing all Americans with diverse opportunities for arts participation. The NEA invests in training, mentorship, and staff recognition programs, and promotes strong employee morale and work-life balance in order to attract, develop, and retain a talented and diverse staff.

Below is a list of strategies for implementation of this important objective:

- Recruit and retain a highly motivated, diverse, and talented workforce.
- Ensure that all agency staff are developed and trained to succeed while employed at the NEA.
- Develop and maintain a work environment that is safe, diverse, and inclusive, with an emphasis on open communication and the well-being of NEA staff.

The NEA identifies critical workforce needs; it recruits strategically and in compliance with government hiring principles; it provides its workforce with incentives such as training and advancement opportunities, as appropriate; and it develops and maintains policies and processes to ensure excellent performance and accountability.

In addition to government-wide benefits—including family-friendly leave policies, and flexible/alternative work schedules—the NEA provides wellness services, such as its interagency agreement with Federal Occupational Health (FOH) to provide health center services and employee assistance programs to agency staff.

The NEA also uses federally approved awards such as performance awards, special acts, and time-off awards as a means to reward and incentivize employees. Estimated awards spending in FY 2024 and FY 2025 is provided in [Appendix B: Awards and Recognition Data](#).

In FY 2025, the NEA will continue its commitment to the principles of embedding diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) into the agency's work practices, to foster a meaningful environment where employees can thrive.

Office of Inspector General (OIG)

The Office of Inspector General was established in 1989 pursuant to provisions of the Inspector General Act Amendments of 1988 (P.L. 100-504), and the Inspector General Reform Act of 2008. The OIG is responsible for conducting audits, investigating allegations of unlawful or unauthorized activity, and providing technical assistance to grantees on matters relating to the financial management of their awards. The OIG helps the agency evaluate and improve management systems to prevent waste, fraud, and abuse, and ensure efficient, effective service. In addition, the OIG works with the Chief Information Officer to ensure the NEA’s compliance with the Federal Information Security Management Act.

There is no separate appropriation for the OIG; the OIG’s budget is funded within the NEA’s Administration budget. Pursuant to the Inspector General Reform Act of 2008, the following table reflects the funding provided for the Inspector General.

Program Activity (\$000)	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024	FY 2025 Request
Personnel Compensation	586		781
Personnel Benefits	134		191
Travel	1		15
Other Services	172		183
Training	6		15
Equipment	<u>1</u>		<u>2</u>
Total	900	TBD	1,187
FTEs	4	TBD	5

Appendices

Appendix A: Budget Request by Object Class
(\$ thousands)

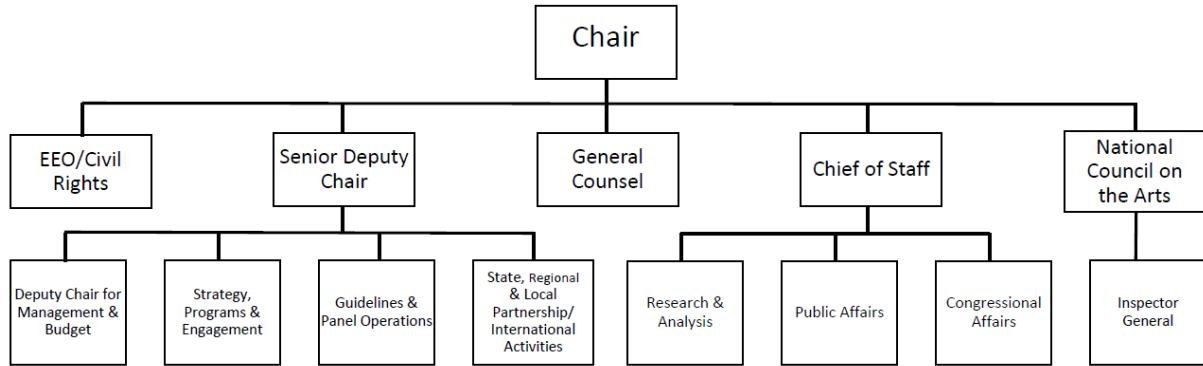
Object Class	Description	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024	FY 2025 Request
	Promotion of the Arts			
25.1	Advisory and Assistance Services	780		850
41.0	Grants, Subsidies, and Contributions	159,770		163,750
	Total	160,550		164,600
	Program Support			
21.0	Travel and Transportation of Persons	43		80
24.0	Printing and Reproduction	49		52
25.1	Advisory and Assistance Services	1,653		1,602
25.2	Other Services from Non-Federal Sources	646		744
25.3	Other Goods and Services from Federal Sources	150		20
26.0	Supplies and Materials	0		2
	Total	2,541		2,500
	Administration			
11.1	Full-Time Permanent	16,126		20,199
11.3	Other than Full-Time Permanent	2,595		3,131
11.5	Other Personnel Compensation	737		590
11.8	Special Personal Services Payments	132		0
11.9	<i>Total Personnel Compensation</i>	19,590		23,920
12.1	Civilian Personnel Benefits	6,578		8,325
13.0	Benefits for Former Personnel	0		10
	Total Personnel Compensation and Benefits	26,168		32,255
21.0	Travel and Transportation of Persons	325		389
22.0	Transportation of Things	3		5
23.1	Rental Payments to GSA	3,029		3,157
23.3	Communications, Utilities and Misc. Charges	265		261
24.0	Printing and Reproduction	9		20
25.1	Advisory and Assistance Services	985		1,036
25.2	Other Services from Non-Federal Sources	3,299		3,096
25.3	Other Goods and Services from Federal Sources	2,358		2,058
26.0	Supplies and Materials	27		46
31.0	Equipment	869		677
42.0	Insurance Claims & Indemnities	0		0
	Other Object Classes	11,169		10,745
	Total	37,337		43,000
	TOTAL - National Endowment for the Arts	200,428	TBD	210,100

FY 2023 includes use of available funds carried over from prior years. Excludes reimbursable funding, use of gift funds, and obligations funded by the American Rescue Plan.

Appendix B: Awards and Recognition Data
(\$ thousands)

Estimate of FY 2024 Salary Spending, excluding Senior Executive Service (SES), Political Appointees, and Expert Consultants	TBD
Estimate for awards spending in FY 2024	TBD
Estimate of FY 2024 Awards Spending as a Percent of FY 2024 non-SES Salary Spending	2.5%
Estimate of FY 2025 Salary Spending, excluding SES, Political Appointees, and Expert Consultants	20,503
Estimate for awards spending in FY 2025	513
Estimate of FY 2025 Award Spending as a Percent of FY 2024 non-SES Salary Spending	2.5%

Appendix C: Organizational Chart
(as of FY 2023)



Appendix D: NEA Support of Executive Orders 13985, 13988, 14020, 14035

The Chief Diversity Officer oversees development, coordination, and implementation of the agency's **Equity Action Plan** and **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility Plan**.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility

The Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility plan and guides the agency efforts to embeds principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in our agency work practices, creating an environment for employees to thrive.

NEA Equity Action Plan

In the NEA's [Equity Action Plan](#) of January 20, 2022, which is in alignment with the NEA's 2022-2026 Strategic Plan, the agency identified the following five areas for increased focus in order to support equitable opportunities for arts participation and practice for all Americans in the United States:

- **Arts participation in underserved communities** to address and reduce the gap between availability of arts programming and the participation of underserved groups.
- **Community engagement** to expand engagement with underserved communities through webinars and key partner organizations.
- **Accessibility** to develop concrete policies and procedures for providing access accommodations for persons with disabilities and limited English proficiency.
- **Data** to determine the feasibility of expanding demographic data collection related to grant beneficiaries, staff, and leadership of grant recipient organizations.
- **Contracting and procurement** to increase awareness of contract and procurement opportunities to HUBZone and other underrepresented groups.

In 2022-2023, the NEA has made progress in each of these areas, among others:

- **Arts Participation:** Through a cooperative agreement with NEA, South Arts is working in partnership with the other five Regional Arts Organizations to develop and implement the ArtsHERE subgranting initiative, supporting a range of eligible organizations throughout the arts and cultural ecosystem that have demonstrated a commitment to equity within their practices and programming.
- **Community Engagement:** The NEA used its media platforms to amplify stories and narratives from grantees, highlighting various cultures, practices, and communities from across the country and U.S. jurisdictions, such as Hispanic/Latinx, Native American, Black/African American, AAPI, women, and LGBTQ+ communities.

- **Accessibility:** Addressed language barrier concerns by translating grant program guidelines into Spanish.
- **Data:** Equity-focused data dashboards were developed for staff use to support equity-focused analysis of agency grants and initiatives. An interactive map, which already includes Census data on poverty and urban areas, was updated for internal use to include additional information on underserved communities, including race and ethnicity.
- **Contracting and Procurement:** Contracting Officers continued to build relationships with SBA and other agencies to share resources to find ways to improve equity in procurement and contracting in underserved communities.

Gender Equity

The NEA, in accordance with Executive Order 13988: *Preventing and Combating Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity or Sexual Orientation*, approved a policy on Gender Pronoun usage and provided training for NEA staff on the policy. The NEA has advanced efforts towards gender parity by elevating the stories and voices of women-identifying artists working toward gender equity, particularly women of color, in NEA events and convenings as well as social media, blogs, interviews, magazines, and other publications.

In FY 2022, the NEA prepared research briefs about artists in the U.S. workforce inclusive of gender-focused research, targeted outlets with gender-focused audiences, and expanded its media engagement on all platforms to share the reports' findings and spotlight stories related to gender equity in the arts. The research briefs are an analysis of demographic disparities, including gender disparities among management occupations in the arts. The briefs are meant partly to support a broader movement among arts and cultural funders and organizations to examine issues of access and equity within the larger sector.

Examples of Growing Arts Participation - Grants for Arts Projects (in support of EO 13985, 14035)

The agency plans to increase funding for grants projects that focus on underrepresented communities within the arts, including, but not limited to, increasing funding provided to Local Arts Agencies for subgranting, and arts education. Examples of *Grants for Arts Projects* awarded in FY 2023 include:

- **San Francisco, CA** - San Francisco Opera Association received \$70,000 to support the presentation of *Omar*, a new work by composers Rhiannon Giddens and Michael Abels. The work is based on the life and the 1831 autobiography of Omar ibn Said, a West African scholar of Islamic faith enslaved in the Carolinas. Project activities include community engagement events designed to deepen audience knowledge of this part of U.S. history and a bilingual workshop on the power of storytelling.
- **Portland, ME** - Indigo Arts Alliance received \$35,000 for an artist residency program, focused on advancing BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) artists, that will

pair participants with established mentors and provide opportunities for critical feedback and public engagement through artist talks, symposia, workshops, and other events. The resident artists also will receive a stipend, housing, materials, and supplies.

- **Bedford, TX** - Arts Council of Northeast Tarrant County received \$20,000 to provide online and in-person art classes in a wide range of artistic mediums including painting, sculpture, poetry, and music. Professional teaching artists trained in art therapy teach community members in Northeast Tarrant and Southern Denton counties in Texas, with a focus on outreach to older adults, individuals with disabilities, minorities and communities of color, and low-income communities. All art materials are provided for free, and no art experience is required for participation.
- **Portland, OR** - Triangle Productions received \$10,000 for The Umbrella Project, an initiative focused on preserving the cultural heritage of Oregon's LGBTQ community. The theater will archive and provide public access to historical materials specific to live theater productions in Portland, and will conduct staged readings of plays. The project also will include talkback discussions with former cast members, producers, directors, and playwrights discussing their experiences in early LGBTQ theater, to be recorded and included in the archive.
- **New York, NY** - Center for Art Tradition and Cultural Heritage received \$25,000 to support ethnographic fieldwork, documentation, and an exhibition that explore the traditions of costume design and ritual performance from New York City's Black and Latinx LGBTQ+ ballroom community. The exhibition of costumes and fieldwork documentation will be presented at City Lore, ArtsWestchester, and Pioneer Works. Additional activities will include panel discussions and workshops.

Examples of Community Engagement - Support for Historically Black Colleges and Universities

The NEA is committed to advancing the agency's work pertaining to diversity, equity, inclusion, and access, through community engagement and by fostering mutual respect for the diverse beliefs and values of all individuals and groups. Part of this commitment includes our partnership with the White House Initiative on HBCUs. Since 2018, the NEA has engaged with 74 out of 102 HBCUs. A few *Grants for Arts Projects* examples of successful applications from or involving HBCUs in FY 2023 include:

- **Montgomery, AL** - Alabama State University, a historically Black university, received \$11,266 for a jazz festival featuring headliner artists, regional blues and jazz musicians, and high school and college performers. The family-friendly event also may include children's performances, opportunities for local visual artists to showcase their works, as well as Korean art exhibitions and/or traditional Korean dance.
- **Truro, MA** - Truro Center for the Arts at Castle Hill received \$10,000 to support the Osborne Fellowship of the Castle Hill Artist Residency Program, a partnership with Morgan State University, a historically Black university in Baltimore. Castle Hill will

provide selected artists with stipends, housing, studio space, access to equipment, mentorship, exhibition opportunities, and exchange with fellow artists and the local community. The fellowship will benefit emerging visual and multimedia artists who attend or are recent graduates of historically Black colleges or universities.

- **Bentonville, AR** - Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art received \$50,000 for a catalogue, online resources, and a symposium exploring the Alfred Stieglitz Collection, co-owned with Fisk University, a historically Black university. Working in partnership, the museum and university will tell the story of Stieglitz, Georgia O’Keeffe, and other key modernist artists exploring themes of race, education, and geography.
- **Broken Arrow, OK** - Greatest Stories Never Told received \$20,000 to support artist fees and personnel costs for the development and touring production of a new play about Bessie Coleman, the first Black female aviator. The project will be developed in partnership with faculty and students at Bowie State University, a historically Black university in Maryland, as well as with middle and high school students in the Bowie, Maryland, area. The work will then be toured to middle and high schools throughout Oklahoma and West Virginia.
- **Atlanta, GA** - Alliance Theatre at Robert W. Woodruff Arts Center received \$50,000 for the Spelman Leadership Fellows workforce development program. In partnership with Spelman College, a historically Black college, the Alliance Theatre will expand its fellowship program to include site visits to arts and culture institutions aligning with the participating fellows’ career goals. The fellows will learn the complexities of running large nonprofit organizations as they develop new skills.
- **Norfolk, VA** - Virginia Stage Company received \$10,000 to support a production of William Shakespeare’s *Henry V*. In partnership with Norfolk State University, a historically Black university, professional teaching artists and university students will conduct workshops in area high schools, exploring the play’s themes of leadership and power. During the production, Norfolk State University students will perform alongside professional artists.

Examples - Accessibility

In alignment with the NEA Equity Action Plan, the agency helps to make the arts accessible for people with disabilities, older adults, veterans, and people living in institutions by:

- Providing technical assistance to applicants, grantees, and the public to help them comply with accessibility laws and ensure access for all audiences and participants to their arts activities.
- Funding projects that provide art experiences for people with disabilities, older adults, and people in health care and correctional institutions, as well as professional development for those interested in working with these populations.

- Identifying barriers for people with disabilities who are interested in pursuing careers in the arts, expanding career opportunities, and encouraging diversity in the arts.
- Supporting infrastructure, research, policy discussions, and practices around the arts and aging and demonstrating the need and value of arts experiences for, by, and with older adults.
- Leading and participating with other federal and nonprofit organizations in seeking solutions to challenges related to health and human development.

In 2023 the NEA, in partnership with Art Beyond Sight, launched a comprehensive [Toolkit on Careers in the Arts for People with Disabilities](#). The toolkit features tools and resources designed to advance opportunities for artists and other cultural workers in the arts. It is comprised of four sections targeting artists and those seeking work in the arts; arts employers, including curators, presenters, casting directors, etc.; arts educators; and funders; as well as [profiles of disabled artists](#) who have achieved careers success in the arts. Together with a [series of webinars](#), the toolkit aims to increase diversity, equity, and inclusion for people with disabilities across the arts sector.

The NEA also supports learning and professional development in cultural accessibility for staff from the 56 state and jurisdictional arts agencies and the six regional arts organizations.

The NEA's Office of Accessibility also provides training and resources internally to agency staff. Information on laws, regulations, and guidelines is provided, as well as assistance on providing quality customer service, communication, and accommodations to people with disabilities.

Appendix E: Native Arts and Tribal Affairs

Native Arts and Culture

The NEA continues to grow investments and partnerships in support of native communities. Areas of exploration include language preservation and revitalization, understanding and healing from the legacy of native boarding schools, and other investments in support of Native arts and culture.

Working with Native-led national service organizations and an interagency federal working group, the NEA has carried out strategic outreach to Native communities and artists since 2016. Outreach includes nation-to-nation work with tribal governments, reservation communities, and Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), and at conferences and convenings of indigenous leaders and organizations. Outreach also includes recruitment of Native artists and community leaders to participate as panelists to review grant applications. As building relationships with TCUs is a high priority for the NEA, the agency also works in coordination with the White House Initiative on American Indian and Alaska Native Education. The initiative, located within the Department of Education, seeks to support activities that expand education opportunities and improve education outcomes for all American Indian and Alaska Native students.

In October 2022, the NEA hosted its first in-person Tribal Consultation at the International Conference of Indigenous Archives, Libraries, and Museums in Temecula, California on the tribal lands of the *Pechanga* Band of Luiseño Indians.

In October 2023, the NEA held a second Tribal Consultation at the International Conference of Indigenous Archives, Libraries, and Museums in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The region is the ancestral homeland of the Apache, Caddo, Tonkawa, and Wichita, and of historical importance to the Comanche, Kiowa, Osage, Quapaw, Muscogee (Creek) and Seminole. Today, 39 distinct tribes reside in Oklahoma.

This year's tribal consultation process was developed over the last several years beginning on April 7, 2021, when the NEA hosted a tribal consultation to discuss President Biden's Memorandum on Tribal Consultation and Strengthening Nation-to-Nation Relationships. The purpose of this meeting was to update tribal leaders on the NEA's engagement with Native cultural leaders, to use the input of tribal leaders to inform our Nation-to-Nation consultation plan, and to inform our work related to the Executive Order on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government. On August 10, 2021, the NEA hosted a tribal consultation for elected leaders of federally-recognized tribes to respond to the agency's [draft policy on Tribal Consultation](#); and, in October 2021, the NEA published its formal Tribal Consultation Policy based on these two nation-to-nation consultations with Tribal Leaders, and a series of community meetings with Native American and Alaska Native artists and arts/cultural organizations.

In the Fall of 2021, in coordination with the Departments of Interior and Health & Human Services, the NEA became one of ten participating signatory agencies on a [Memorandum of](#)

[Agreement on Native Languages](#). In coordination with these agencies, the NEA is producing a 2nd edition of its free downloadable guide, [Federal Resources for Native Arts & Cultural Activities](#).

Grants for Arts Projects examples of successful applications from or involving tribes in FY 2023 include:

- **Fulton, MI** - The Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi received \$30,000 for a powwow gathering Potawatomi people from across the United States and Canada to celebrate the tribe's culture with traditional song, drumming, and dance. Additional activities include cultural symposia, such as a language conference, classes, and crafts workshops.
- **Wakpala, SD** - The Patricia Locke Foundation, an Indigenous-led nonprofit whose work is centered on the Standing Rock Sioux and Pine Ridge Reservations and is an Indian/Native American Tribally Designated Organization, received \$25,000 to support workshops on the Indigenous flute taught by master artist and NEA National Heritage Fellow Bryan Akipa, who grew up in the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate Reservation of northeastern South Dakota. Students will learn how to assemble an Indigenous flute, as well as play and sing songs in the Lakota language.
- **Weogufka, AL** - Ekvnv Yefolecvlke, an Indian/Native American Tribally Designated Organization, received \$25,000 to support a Native language and cultural arts immersion program. To preserve and revitalize the Maskoke Creek language and culture, members of the tribe will receive instruction from Native American artists in basketry, bead work, pottery, textile arts, tribal customs, and ceremonies. The classes will be taught in the Maskoke Creek language and serve children and adults in the Maskoke diaspora in Alabama, Florida, and Oklahoma.
- **Rapid City, SD** - First Peoples Fund received \$37,500 in support of instruction on traditional Lakota music for the community of Pine Ridge, South Dakota. Guest teachers from the community will offer classes about a wide range of topics that may include Lakota music history, ethnomusicology, musical genres, and a variety of musical instruments. The program will benefit Oglala Lakota people in Pine Ridge, and strengthen Lakota musical traditions and help ensure that they are passed down to future generations.
- **Juneau, AK** - Juneau Arts and Humanities Council received \$60,000 for the multidisciplinary Rock Aak'w Festival, a weekend-long, family-friendly, and inclusive festival presented by the council in partnership with the Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska. The event will showcase and celebrate the shared experiences of performing arts of Indigenous people, including music, dance, and storytelling artists. Workshops and masterclasses will instruct teachers on bringing the Indigenous cultures into their classrooms.
- **Missoula, MT** - Missoula Writing Collaborative received \$35,000 to support creative writing residencies for elementary school students on the Flathead Reservation of the

Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. Led by professional writers, regional poets, and classroom teachers, students will study Native American poets' work and learn to write various forms of poetry inspired by the natural world. The collaborative will disseminate the students' work through published anthologies and public poetry readings, and select student work will be translated into Salish.

Appendix F: Climate Justice

Executive Order 14008, “Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad”; Executive Order 13990, “Protecting Public Health and the Environment and Restoring Science to Tackle the Climate Crisis”; and Executive Order 14030, “Climate-Related Financial Risk” direct agencies to take a whole-of-Government approach to reduce climate pollution in every sector of the economy, increase resilience to the impacts of climate change, and protect public health. Through grantmaking, the NEA supports programming that engages the American public around the issue of climate change.

Examples of successful applications supporting climate change engagement in FY 2023 include:

- **Chattanooga, Tennessee** - Stove Works received a \$12,000 grant to support the exhibition *TERRITORIAL: The Land and Us*, and related engagement activities. The exhibition will present works addressing social injustice in relation to land use, colonialism, climate crisis, and labor issues and educating audiences about efforts to bring about renewed custodianship for shared land. Public programming will include performances by participating artists, talks with environmentalist scholars, community workshops, and screenings of a film exploring Indigenous land rights.
- **Fort Lauderdale, Florida** - South Florida Symphony Orchestra received \$10,000 to support educational concerts designed for elementary and middle school students that will feature multimedia, costumes, props, and narration to explore the plight of Florida’s coral reef. Following the concerts, students will have the opportunity to meet the performers and play instruments from the orchestra. Learning materials will be provided to teachers prior to the concerts, which will take place throughout South Florida.
- **New Orleans, Louisiana** - Friends of a Studio in the Woods received a \$37,500 grant for an artist residency program. Selected artists will be provided with room and board, studio space, and a stipend to create new work in response to the climate crisis, environmental degradation, and rising sea levels. Artists also will have the opportunity to engage with the local community during various public events.
- **Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania** - Society for Arts and Crafts received \$25,000 to support the exhibition *Climate Awakening: Crafting a Sustainable Future*, related public programming, and an accompanying catalogue. The exhibition and catalogue will present artwork that examines climate change, including its effects on communities and ecosystems. Public programming will include talks, artist demonstrations, gallery tours, and interactive activities. A curriculum guide will be developed for use with school group visits to the exhibition.

In addition, the NEA supports the recovery of arts and cultural communities devastated by major disasters through financial support, technical and policy assistance, and leadership. Since FY 2018, the NEA has served as a member agency in the federal Natural and Cultural Resources Recovery Support Function (NCRRSF), working in coordination with other federal agencies, such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Department of Interior. In recent years, NEA staff have been deployed multiple times to the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico to assist in the wake of Hurricanes Irma and Maria.

Appendix G: Effective Financial Management Emphasizing Automated Systems

The NEA is committed to the stewardship of the public funds and donations that it receives. To help ensure the appropriate oversight over these financial resources, the NEA utilizes a number of automated financial management systems, including:

- Leveraging the financial system expertise of U.S. Department of Transportation's Enterprise Services Center (ESC), which provides the NEA with an Oracle-based fully-compliant financial management system (Delphi) and full financial services support.
- Using an automated grants management system (eGMS) developed and supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) with economies of scale achieved through the use and funding by a cross team of cultural agencies.
- Using ESC's E2 travel system for online travel arrangements, authorizations, and associated payments.
- Utilizing the payroll processing operations of the National Finance Center to process staff pay and benefits.

This focus on automation also aids the agency in digitizing inputs, enabling electronic approvals and signatures, promoting data sharing, and meeting electronic records requirements. The agency's most recent assessment of improper payment risk, which included the review of preventive and detective payment controls, noted that NEA had an insignificant risk of significant improper payments. The agency's audits of Data Act reporting also found that the Agency submissions were complete, accurate, and timely.

Separately, it is worth noting that, for the 21st consecutive year, the NEA has received an unqualified audit opinion on its most recent financial statements (FY 2023).

Appendix H: Good Accounting Obligation in Government Act

In accordance with the Good Accounting Obligation in Government Act (P.L. 115-414), which requires each agency to include, in its annual budget justification, a report that identifies each public recommendation issued by Government Accountability Office (GAO) and the agency's inspector general that has remained unimplemented for one year or more, the NEA reports:

- No public recommendations of the Government Accountability Office.
- In regards to public recommendations for corrective action from the NEA's Office of Inspector General, no financial recommendations in a status of "open" or "closed, unimplemented" for a period exceeding one year preceding the submission of this budget justification.

The NEA continues to review and seeks to take appropriate actions in a timely manner in response to recommendations from the Government Accountability Office and the agency's Office of Inspector General. The NEA is currently working on corrective actions in response to public recommendations from the NEA's Office of Inspector General reported during the audits of the agency.

Appendix I: Leveraging of Shared Federal Services

The NEA continues to leverage the availability of technical/operational expertise and shared-services within the federal government to operate efficiently and effectively. The Agency currently has the following interagency agreements in place:

- Office of Personnel Management (OPM) for human resource staffing support. OPM provides human resource project planning and management support; candidate assessment and referral support; staffing consultation services; performance management system and support, and metrics and reporting services.
- U.S. Department of Interior's Interior Business Center for contracting and acquisition support services.
- Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency for employee security clearance services.
- U.S. Department of Health and Human services for Grants.gov.
- National Endowment for the Humanities for the NEA's electronic grants management system (eGMS).
- National Finance Center for the processing of employee timekeeping, pay and benefits.
- Department of Transportation, Federal Aviation Administration, Enterprise Services Center for Delphi, the NEA's Oracle-based financial management system.
- General services administration for web-based end-to-end travel and expense management tool.

The NEA also began using the Department of Treasury's government-wide G-invoicing system, a new system that is intended to help agencies manage intergovernmental buy/sell transactions.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2026

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

STRATEGIC PLAN
FY 2022-2026



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NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS STRATEGIC PLAN – IN BRIEF: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

This National Endowment for the Arts' (NEA) strategic plan covers fiscal years 2022 through 2026. The plan took shape while the agency was implementing provisions of the American Rescue Act of 2021, designed to bring direct relief to Americans enduring the health and economic crises of COVID-19. By including the NEA in this comprehensive relief strategy, Congress reaffirmed the NEA's capacity to support a vital and growing segment of the U.S. economy: the arts and cultural sector—including artists and other creative workers—on whose stability rests economic and job opportunities for people and places nationwide.

Amid this historic backdrop, the NEA is positioning itself as the lead agency within the federal government for social and economic change through the arts. The NEA will broaden and deepen its engagement with organizations that seek to extend the arts and the arts' benefits to underserved populations, even as the agency will support arts projects that aim to help improve individual health outcomes, or that use systems-level approaches to help strengthen or heal communities. The NEA also will invest in arts projects that support the training, research, technical assistance, and technologies needed for the sector to serve Americans wherever they live, and to benefit future generations. Ultimately, through effective operational practices—and with a dedicated focus on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility—the NEA will achieve the goals and objectives of its strategic plan.

MISSION STATEMENT

The arts strengthen and promote the well-being and resilience of people and communities. By advancing equitable opportunities for arts participation and practice, the National Endowment for the Arts fosters and sustains an environment in which the arts benefit everyone in the United States.

VISION STATEMENT

A nation in which the arts are essential to our democracy and to reaching our highest potential by nourishing creative enterprise, freedom of thought, imagination, and inquiry.

STRATEGIC GOALS

Goal 1. Support opportunities for all people to participate in the arts and arts education.

Objective 1.1 Expand public access to the NEA's programs and award-supported activities.

Description: By increasing opportunities for the public to encounter different artists, art forms, and artistic and cultural traditions, the NEA invites others to enlarge their aesthetic, emotional, and intellectual boundaries and to realize a greater understanding of the human condition. For the nation and for communities everywhere, these opportunities can awaken social, civic, and economic benefits. The NEA pursues strategies that enable arts participation by people from all backgrounds. Those participants include artists and other creative workers, who are integral to the work of this plan.

Objective 1.2 *Prioritize data-driven methods to broaden and deepen engagement with underserved communities.*

Description: *The NEA uses data and analysis to identify and address gaps in representation of underserved groups among the agency's grant applicants, grantees, and program beneficiaries. This evidence base permits the agency to conduct effective outreach and engagement and to make strategic investments and improve program designs to meet the needs of distinct communities that face persistent barriers in accessing or benefiting from arts programs.*

Objective 1.3 *Provide opportunities for people throughout the country to participate in arts education and to increase their knowledge and skills in the arts at all stages of life.*

Description: *By helping to foster public awareness and appreciation of various art forms and artistic and cultural traditions, the NEA boosts public capacity for lifelong participation in the arts. In particular, this objective supports arts education in and out of school, for students (including artists and arts instructors) at all phases of development, through formal and informal learning opportunities. For society at large, support of arts learning translates to acquisition of skills and competencies that are highly prized in today's economy and jobs market.*

Objective 1.4 *Ensure opportunities for the international exchange of artists and arts and cultural traditions.*

Description: *The United States produces artists and art forms that are recognized and celebrated the world over. The NEA works with the U.S. State Department and other entities to foster country-to-country exchanges in the arts—thus providing U.S. artists and art forms with greater international exposure, but also allowing people in the U.S. to experience other artistic and cultural traditions.*

Goal 2. Integrate the arts with strategies that promote the well-being and resilience of people and communities.

Objective 2.1 *Support arts projects with a focus on advancing the health and well-being of individuals.*

Description: *The NEA supports programs that address specific health conditions or that integrate the arts with strategies designed to improve individual health and well-being.*

Objective 2.2 *Embed the arts in system-wide initiatives that strengthen or heal communities.*

Description: *The NEA is building on initiatives that seek to advance systems change through the arts—such as the Arts Education Collective Impact grants program and the Our Town creative placemaking grants program—by encouraging projects that integrate the arts with broader strategies to produce thriving communities. The agency also encourages arts projects that promote community healing and/or recovery, or that strengthen a community's natural, cultural, and economic resources.*

Goal 3. Build capacity and infrastructure within the arts sector through knowledge-sharing, tools, resources, and evidence-based practices.

Objective 3.1 *Support the development of skills and strategies that will enable arts leaders to manage more effective organizations and agencies.*

Description: *Several factors have contributed to a demand for wide range of leadership skills and competencies for arts managers to address new and changing environments. These factors include the following needs: to lead arts organizations effectively in a COVID-19 and post-COVID-19 environment; to promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in the arts; and to ensure continuity of skills acquisition and learning for successive generations*

of arts leaders, including those working in policy and practice at the crossroads of the arts and other sectors (e.g., health, community development, the environment). To help fulfill such needs, the NEA supports peer-to-peer learning groups and workshops for emerging arts administrators.

Objective 3.2 Produce research, statistics, and general information about the arts for the benefit of the arts sector and beyond.

Description: By investing in research and evaluation, the NEA promotes empirical insights on the value and impact of the arts for individuals and communities. The NEA also circulates evidence, data, and research resources to support the ongoing work of cultural providers, funders, researchers, and policymakers. Through the Office of Public Affairs, the NEA regularly communicates with the arts sector and additional audiences about the arts as well as about ideas and topics of growing importance to arts practitioners.

Objective 3.3 Invest in the capacity of arts organizations and artists to serve a broader public through digital or emergent technology.

Description: Artists and arts organizations continue to use digital and emergent technology as a creative medium for expression and for audience engagement. Furthermore, artistic practice during the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the need for hybrid (in-person and digital) arts programming options and for bridging “digital divides” in the arts and in the communities served. The NEA supports investments in the capacity of arts organizations to integrate technology more effectively—and to improve conditions for accessibility—in the creation and delivery of art.

Goal 4. Pursue and adopt exemplary practices to support the agency’s mission.

Objective 4.1 Continue to be accountable and transparent to the public through effective operations that promote vigilant stewardship of funds.

Description: NEA staff design, implement, and refine work practices and systems that are efficient and transparent and deliver evidence of impacts to U.S. taxpayers.

Objective 4.2 Foster a skilled, agile, diverse, and cohesive workforce.

Description: The NEA is committed to embedding principles of diversity, equity, access, inclusion, and accessibility in its work practices and systems, creating an environment for employees to thrive. The NEA also invests in training and staff recognition programs, and promotes work-life balance so as to attract, develop, and retain a talented and diverse staff that is empowered and equipped to execute a shared mission and vision for the NEA.

CROSS-CUTTING OBJECTIVE

The NEA will model diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in the arts through all of its activities and operations.

Description: The NEA makes it a priority to give underserved populations every opportunity to benefit from the programs and projects it supports. The agency accomplishes this cross-cutting objective partly by ensuring that grants are recommended in every Congressional District and by monitoring the presence of NEA-funded activities in urban and rural areas, and in high-poverty and other underserved populations. This work is amplified and extended through the NEA’s state and regional partnership agreements. In continuing efforts to identify and eliminate barriers to NEA grants, the agency also monitors a range of characteristics for organizations that receive NEA grants support, and it will explore methods for collecting demographic data associated with organizations receiving NEA funds. Moreover, in its own policies and practices for managing human resources, the agency ensures a diverse workplace free from barriers to opportunity.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

In the narrative section titled “Strategic Goals,” each goal is accompanied by a brief description, the title of a designated “Goal Leader” or “Lead Office,” and a list of “Strategies,” followed by a list of the “Contributing Programs” and “Cross-Agency Collaborations” that the strategies will invoke. Also included under each goal are “Performance Goals” and broader “Evidence-Building” strategies.

The NEA Strategic Plan applies to all agency activities, foremost among them grantmaking, but also to activities and functions such as leadership initiatives, convenings, training and capacity-building efforts, and strategic partnerships (with federal agencies, state arts agencies [SAAs], regional arts organizations [RAOs], and other public and private organizations), and to the agency’s internal operations.

The Office of the Chair will be deeply involved and engaged in the agency’s pursuit of all strategic goals and objectives.

PROPOSED NEA STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK: 2022-2026

MISSION

The arts strengthen and promote the well-being and resilience of people and communities. By advancing equitable opportunities for arts participation and practice, the National Endowment for the Arts fosters and sustains an environment in which the arts benefit everyone in the United States.

VISION

A nation in which the arts are essential to our democracy and to reaching our highest potential by nourishing creative enterprise, freedom of thought, imagination, and inquiry.

GOAL 1

Support opportunities for all people to participate in the arts and arts education.

OBJECTIVE 1.1 Expand public access to the NEA's programs and award-supported activities.

OBJECTIVE 1.2 Prioritize data-driven methods to broaden and deepen engagement with underserved communities.

OBJECTIVE 1.3 Provide opportunities for people throughout the country to participate in arts education and to increase their knowledge and skills in the arts at all stages of life.

OBJECTIVE 1.4 Ensure opportunities for the international exchange of artists and arts and cultural traditions.

GOAL 2

Integrate the arts with strategies that promote the well-being and resilience of people and communities.

OBJECTIVE 2.1 Support arts projects with a focus on advancing the health and well-being of individuals.

OBJECTIVE 2.2 Embed the arts in system-wide initiatives that strengthen or heal communities.

GOAL 3

Build capacity and infrastructure within the arts sector through knowledge-sharing, tools, resources, and evidence-based practices.

OBJECTIVE 3.1 Support the development of skills and strategies that will enable arts leaders to manage more effective organizations and agencies.

OBJECTIVE 3.2 Produce research, statistics, and general information about the arts for the benefit of the arts sector and beyond.

OBJECTIVE 3.3 Invest in the capacity of arts organizations and artists to serve a broader public through digital or emergent technology.

GOAL 4

Pursue and adopt exemplary practices to support the agency's mission.

OBJECTIVE 4.1 Continue to be accountable and transparent to the public through effective operations that promote vigilant stewardship of funds.

OBJECTIVE 4.2 Foster a skilled, agile, diverse, and cohesive workforce.

CROSS-CUTTING OBJECTIVE

The NEA will model diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in the arts through all of its activities and operations.



INTRODUCTION

“The arts... belong to all the people of the United States.”

- National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act of 1965

As the premier arts agency of the U.S. government, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) has positioned itself as a vital and sustaining force in American culture, committed to serving all people throughout the nation by bringing the arts into their lives, schools, and neighborhoods. Another enduring role of the agency is to cultivate and elevate existing artistic and cultural traditions as critical assets within communities.

Over the past 50+ years, the NEA has become the largest funder of the arts and arts education nationwide and, as a catalyst of public and private support for the arts, an essential institution. Established by Congress in 1965, the NEA annually awards an average of approximately 2,400 grants and cooperative agreements exceeding \$129 million, funding the arts in all 50 states and six U.S. jurisdictions, including rural and urban areas. The NEA also exercises leadership by supporting key initiatives, research and evaluation, and domestic and international partnerships.

The arts’ tangible and intangible rewards extend to various realms of our lives. Among the more measurable benefits that the arts confer to society are job creation and economic growth. As of 2019, for example, arts and cultural production added 4.3 percent directly to the nation’s GDP, for a total approaching a trillion dollars (\$919.7 billion). In the same year, the sector employed 5.2 million wage-and-salary workers whose total compensation was \$447 billion.¹ NEA funding to organizations that provide the arts and arts education throughout the U.S. serves this greater economic good, catalyzing further investments in jobs and economic activity that can improve lives and livelihoods for Americans everywhere.

Most recently, in recognition of the NEA’s capacity to promote job growth and financial well-being across the sector—outcomes that translate to whole communities and to the nation itself—Congress appropriated additional funds to the NEA under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. This historic legislation is intended to fuel U.S. recovery from the devastating economic and health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The NEA’s grantees are vital partners in extending these and other benefits. Eligible applicants to the NEA include nonprofit organizations; units of state and local government; federally recognized tribal communities or tribes; and, where permitted, individuals. Notwithstanding additional awards such as those administered under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, the NEA makes dollar-for-dollar cost- share/matching grants to support exemplary projects in the following areas:

Artist Communities	Literary Arts	Presenting & Multidisciplinary Works
Arts Education	Local Arts Agencies	Research
Creative Placemaking	Media Arts	State & Regional Arts Organizations
Dance	Museums	Theater
Design	Music	Visual Arts
Folk & Traditional Arts	Musical Theater	
International	Opera	

¹ <https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/SummaryReportAccessLinks.pdf>. (Accessed Dec. 9, 2021.)

All grant applications to the NEA are reviewed on the basis of artistic excellence and artistic merit. Applications generally receive three levels of review. First, they are evaluated by advisory panels composed of a diverse group of disciplinary experts and other individuals, including at least one knowledgeable layperson. Panels make recommendations that are forwarded to the National Council on the Arts.

The National Council on the Arts, the NEA's standing advisory body, is comprised of nationally and internationally renowned artists, distinguished scholars, and arts patrons appointed by the president and confirmed by the Senate. The council also includes non-voting Members of Congress who are appointed by Senate and House leadership from both sides of the aisle. The council reviews and votes to approve or reject the applications. Its recommendations for funding are sent to the NEA chair, who reviews those applications and makes the final decision on all grant awards.

Forty percent of the NEA's grantmaking dollars are awarded to the nation's 56 state and jurisdictional arts agencies (SAAs) and the six regional arts organizations (RAOs). These funds are administered through Partnership Agreements with the SAAs and RAOs—an investment that catalyzes arts projects in thousands of communities across the country. Partnership Agreements allow the NEA to build and sustain local capacity for planning, programming, evaluation, and communications.

Through these agreements, moreover, the NEA supports creation and implementation of statewide and regionwide plans for strengthening arts education and fostering the arts in underserved communities. Each plan responds to the unique needs of the state or region and its constituents, whose views are solicited by each SAA/RAO through surveys, town hall meetings, arts practitioner convenings, policymaker consultations, and other forms of citizen engagement.

Together with the funding that the NEA's grants routinely leverage, the agreements vastly extend the agency's reach and impact, aligning national leadership with local practices and benefits. These partners are critical to the NEA's ability to fulfill its mission.

MISSION

Mission Statement: *The arts strengthen and promote the well-being and resilience of people and communities. By advancing equitable opportunities for arts participation and practice, the National Endowment for the Arts fosters and sustains an environment in which the arts benefit everyone in the United States.*

Arts participation means taking part in any number of activities that include the visual and performing arts, crafts and media arts, design, and literary arts and arts education. People engage with the arts as audience members, as viewers or listeners, as readers or learners, and as creators, curators, or performers. These diverse modes of arts participation—and different forms and genres of artistic expression—quicken and enlarge our sensibilities. The arts broaden and enhance our understanding and our connections to one another and to the greater world.

As with individuals, communities and society at large benefit from the arts and arts education— culturally, civically, and economically. The arts heal and unite: they nurture a sense of shared identity, but they also permit distinctive and often marginalized voices to be heard. It is the responsibility of the NEA to elevate artistic achievements throughout the country and to offer people from all backgrounds the opportunity to partake of this living cultural heritage. By performing these functions, the NEA will help to expand the number of arts participants nationwide and to extend the social, educational, and economic benefits of the arts to communities of every type.

VISION

Vision Statement: *A nation in which the arts are essential to our democracy and to reaching our highest potential by nourishing creative enterprise, freedom of thought, imagination, and inquiry.*

By giving voice to unique talents and perspectives through creative expression, the arts embody and reflect the boldness of our democratic experiment. In remarks he gave at Amherst College on Oct. 26, 1963, President John F. Kennedy described how in the case of the poet Robert Frost, who had died earlier that year, “The artist’s fidelity has strengthened the fiber of our national life.” The president went on to champion the truth-telling powers of artists and the vision of “an America that commands respect not only for its strength but for its civilization as well.”

President Kennedy added: “If sometimes our great artists have been the most critical of our society, it is because their sensitivity and their concern for justice, which must motivate any true artists, make them aware that our nation falls short of its highest potential.” A nation that respects and celebrates the arts is unafraid of inquiring into its mores and behaviors, and re-imagining a more just future. The arts are vital, therefore, to our democratic process, just as they embolden creativity, innovation, and all free thinking.

CONSULTATION

This strategic plan is the result of thorough consultation with the agency's internal and external stakeholders. The first stakeholder consultation period took place in March 2021, prior to the development of the strategic framework. During this phase, feedback was solicited from agency staff and leadership, SAAs, RAOs, and national service organizations in the arts. Also consulted were NEA cooperators and a representative random sample (20 percent) of the agency's applicants and grantees from the past three years.

Internal stakeholder consultation was undertaken through six town-hall meetings of NEA staff. During the town-hall meetings, participants were guided to reflect on the agency's Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and measurable Results, using the SOAR model. Emailed comments also were encouraged during the internal stakeholder consultation period. At the same time, the agency solicited feedback from external stakeholders. Comments were solicited in three main ways: 1) email communications; 2) social media outreach; and 3) a *Federal Register* notice. From March 8 through March 31, 2021, the agency fielded 113 unique comments by email. Feedback came from a variety of external stakeholders, including: national service organizations in the arts, SAAs, city governments, nonprofit arts organizations, non-501(c)(3) arts organizations, and individual artists.

Collectively, this feedback shaped the FY 2022-2026 strategic framework. Members of the National Council on the Arts, along with the agency's leadership and staff, engaged with members of an NEA-wide Executive Working Group in discussions and emails about the strategic framework. After the second draft of the strategic framework was completed, another NEA staff town-hall meeting was held, allowing agency staff to respond directly to the framework and propose strategies for guiding the agency's work for the next four years.

A second stakeholder consultation period took place in August 2021, after the Executive Working Group completed a full draft of the FY 2022-2026 Strategic Plan. During this period, the draft strategic plan was circulated and comments solicited from the internal and external stakeholder groups listed above. The NEA also shared the draft plan with relevant Congressional offices. The agency fielded 107 unique comments from external stakeholders by email. Those comments were solicited in three main ways: 1) email communications; 2) social media outreach; and 3) a *Federal Register* notice. Further comments from the agency's leadership and Executive Working Group also were received and addressed.

CONSULTATION HIGHLIGHT

During the first and second stakeholder consultation periods, the NEA received several comments expressing interest in the role of the arts in addressing climate change and disaster readiness. In response, the NEA referenced climate change as part of its Strategic Objective 2.2 and committed to support projects that use the arts to protect and revitalize natural resources within communities and that reinforce trauma response and recovery efforts within communities and emergency preparedness planning within arts organizations.

STRATEGIC GOALS

STRATEGIC GOAL 1

Support Opportunities for All People to Participate in the Arts and Arts Education.

The arts celebrate our differences while connecting us through shared experiences. Americans from all backgrounds can experience the arts by attending music, dance, and theater performances, visiting art and design exhibits, reading or listening to works of literature, and enjoying the arts via media and technology. Participation also can involve making art of one's own, whether alone or with other people, and acquiring an arts education—knowledge, skills, and competencies that can last a lifetime. All of these varieties of participation can and do occur anywhere, in formal or informal settings, whether inside or outside a specific cultural tradition.

Although the arts are a universal resource, long prized by nations for transmitting cultural identity and creative expression, there is no guarantee that everyone will have equal access to arts opportunities. In the U.S., socioeconomic and geographic factors play an outsized role in people's ability to participate in the arts.

Federal surveys consistently show that higher education and income levels, as well as urbanicity, are closely correlated with greater rates of arts participation. Most recently, a Survey of Public Participation in the Arts found that one in three U.S. adults could not agree with the following statement: "There are plenty of opportunities for me to take part in arts and cultural activities in my neighborhood or community." Among those most likely not to agree were Blacks and Hispanics/Latinos.²

By ensuring greater opportunities for everyone to take part in the arts and arts education, the NEA will extend the benefits of those activities to more Americans. Such benefits are not limited to aesthetic, emotional, or intellectual rewards. They translate to greater social, civic, and economic well-being in the lives of individuals, of whole communities, and of a nation itself.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1.1

Expand Public Access to the NEA's Programs and Award-Supported Activities.

People connect with the arts by attending music, dance, and theater performances; by visiting architectural wonders and art exhibits; by reading works of literature; or by picking up a paintbrush or pencil to capture the world around them or to sketch their innermost thoughts. Today, they even carry in their pockets—in the form of smartphones—access to museums, concert halls, stages, and studios that enable individual arts experiences on demand. For artists and audiences alike, new pathways for participation abound. And yet, access to those in-person and/or digital pathways is by no means guaranteed.

The NEA addresses this need by providing opportunities for the public to engage with the arts through its grant programs, including through Partnership Agreement grants to SAAs and RAOs. The agency's grantmaking is responsive to the changing landscape of arts participation and arts production. The NEA

² https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/US_Patterns_of_Arts_ParticipationRevised.pdf. (Accessed Dec. 9, 2021.)

rewards innovative strategies and models for engaging the public directly with arts experiences, for preserving them, and for making them accessible to all. At the same time, the NEA strives to promote funding and partnership opportunities to all eligible entities, whether or not they have experienced prior success in competing for these resources.

Goal Leader/Lead Office

Office of the Deputy Chair for Programs & Partnerships

Strategies

The funding opportunities administered through the NEA's Programs & Partnerships offices are the primary vehicle for the agency's investment in projects that support artistic and cultural traditions in all 50 states and six U.S. jurisdictions.

Strategies include:

- Support grants and cooperative agreements that enable public access to arts activities throughout the U.S.—whether as audiences or artists/creators.
- Regularly review application guidelines and administrative requirements to ease public burden and increase access to NEA funding while ensuring compliance with government-wide regulations and laws.
- Publish and promote application guidelines and/or other agency materials in language(s) other than English.
- Ensure that grant application and review processes are accessible to people with disabilities.

Contributing Programs

The NEA provides new opportunities for rich and meaningful arts experiences. Foremost among the many funding programs coordinated by the NEA, Grants for Arts Projects (to eligible organizations) and Partnership Agreement grants (to SAAs and RAOs) bring artworks to the public and support jobs for arts and cultural workers. Supported activities include the following:

- Exhibitions, performances, concerts, and readings
- Film screenings
- Touring and outreach activities
- Art festivals
- Public programs that spotlight diverse artistic and cultural heritage
- Radio and television broadcasts, video games, mobile apps, live streaming audio- and video-on demand, podcasts, digital audio files, virtual reality, and other digital applications
- Publication, production, and promotion of digital, audio, or print publications; catalogues; and searchable databases
- Projects that address and reduce barriers to the arts for people with disabilities and that celebrate the work of disabled artists
- Projects that extend the arts to underserved populations, including those whose opportunities to experience the arts are limited by geography, economics, race/ethnicity, or disability
- Projects that connect artists and designers with communities

Although the majority of the NEA's direct grantmaking supports arts projects that are undertaken by eligible organizations, the agency also offers a few awards and honorifics to individuals. These awards include:

- The NEA Literature Fellowships, grants to published creative writers that enable the recipients to set aside time for writing, research, travel, and general career advancement, and to translators who bring specific works from other countries to readers in the United States.
- The NEA Jazz Masters Fellowship is the highest honor that the U.S. bestows on jazz artists. Since 1982, the annual program has elevated to its ranks a select number of living legends who have made exceptional contributions to the advancement of jazz.
- The NEA National Heritage Fellowships are lifetime achievement awards that recognize the recipients' artistic excellence and support their continuing contributions to our nation's traditional arts heritage.

Additionally, the NEA helps to administer the National Medal of Arts, a White House program for the highest award given to artists and arts patrons by the U.S. government. The National Medal of Arts is awarded by the president to individuals or groups who "are deserving of special recognition by reason of their outstanding contributions to the excellence, growth, support and availability of the arts in the United States."

Beyond direct grant support, the NEA provides technical assistance to help arts organizations understand and comply with federal accessibility requirements for people with disabilities, including the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended. NEA grantees are required to affirm their assurance of compliance with applicable laws. The NEA also provides professional development around cultural accessibility for SAAs and RAOs to build capacity for state- and regional-level accessibility initiatives and legal compliance efforts.

Cross-Agency Collaborations

The agency collaborates with several entities to stimulate greater arts engagement by the general public. Examples include:

- Blue Star Museums, a collaboration among the NEA, Blue Star Families, the U.S. Department of Defense, and museums across America. Each summer, Blue Star Museums offers free admission to the nation's active-duty military personnel, the National Guard and Reserves, and their families from Armed Forces Day through Labor Day.
- The NEA Big Read, an initiative of the NEA in partnership with Arts Midwest. The program supports community reading programs around the country every year, each designed around a single NEA Big Read selection.
- The NEA currently partners with the Federal Bureau of Prisons to provide artist-in-residence programs, primarily creative writing, at three federal prisons in New York, West Virginia, and South Dakota. The agency offers technical assistance and support to the teaching artists and helps the prisons in selecting community-based artists for the program.

Performance Goals

The performance goals for this objective are:

1. *The NEA increases the percentage of grant applications received from first-time applicants.*
This goal will be measured by tracking the percent of award applications received and adjudicated by the NEA, by first-time applicant status. A secondary measure will be the success rate of such applications.
2. *The NEA increases the number of communities that host grantee organizations and NEA-supported project activities.*
This goal will be measured by tracking the number of unique communities that contain NEA grantee organizations and, separately, where NEA-supported project activities take place.

3. *The NEA supports projects that expand access to the arts through strategic partnerships.*
This goal will be measured by tracking the percent of NEA-supported projects that identify, as strategic partners, organizations outside the arts sector. A secondary measure will be the percent of NEA-supported projects that identify minority-serving institutions of higher education as strategic partners.

The NEA also will explore the ability to report, during this strategic plan period, on factors related to the quality and depth of strategic partnerships effected through NEA awards, and/or of the public's engagement with NEA programs and award-supported activities. Primary methods for understanding these factors may include qualitative analyses of narrative data collected through NEA grantee reports.

Evidence-Building

Research and evaluation activities for this objective will be identified annually through the agency's Learning Agenda process.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1.2

Prioritize Data-Driven Methods to Broaden and Deepen Engagement with Underserved Communities.

Data and evidence are poised to improve the agency's administration of grants and programs so that even larger numbers of people—from more diverse backgrounds than before—can benefit from NEA programs and grant activities. Tools like U.S. Census Bureau data files and geospatial mapping will allow the agency to target historically underserved areas more effectively in its engagement efforts.³

One example of a NEA program dedicated to this type of engagement is Challenge America, which supports underserved populations through grants to primarily small and mid-sized organizations. Beyond this program, the agency routinely conducts outreach so that its programs and grant-supported activities can benefit people in every Congressional District. Through targeted outreach and award programs, the NEA extends economic opportunities through the arts and creativity to underserved communities and regions across the nation.

In recent years, moreover, the NEA has elevated opportunities for tribal nations—and for historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and other minority-serving institutions of higher education—to participate in NEA programs. By consulting empirical data as the agency undertakes these and other initiatives, the NEA will achieve a greater likelihood of success in building and sustaining relationships with people and organizations that have been underserved by NEA programs.

Goal Leader/Lead Office

Office of the Deputy Chair for Programs & Partnerships
Office of Research & Analysis

Strategies

The NEA makes grants and participates in strategic partnerships to ensure that NEA-funded activities reach a wide breadth of geographic locations and historically underserved populations nationwide. Specific strategies include:

³ For a definition of “underserved,” see the White House *Executive Order on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities through the Federal Government*, Jan. 20, 2021.

- Identify and address gaps in representation of historically underserved communities among NEA applicants, grantees, and beneficiaries. The agency's Equity Action Plan includes strategies to improve data collection. Through its Offices of Research & Analysis (ORA), Guidelines & Panel Operations, and General Counsel, and working with the Department of Justice, the NEA will determine the feasibility of expanding data collection related to program beneficiaries, as well as to the staff and the leadership of recipient organizations. If feasible, adjustments will be made to program data collection forms to increase equity-related information available to staff. This strategy will be implemented through distinct actions addressing the agency's direct grants and partnership agreements starting in FY 2022.
- Collect and act upon data on HBCUs in support of the White House Initiative on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity through Historically Black Colleges and Universities. During FY 2022 and 2023, the agency will plan and conduct a mixed-methods study of HBCUs' arts-related assets, including programs and facilities; identify funding streams supporting HBCU arts programs; and conduct a workforce development gap-analysis examining HBCU arts programs in relation to the communities where HBCUs reside. Findings will be included in a report to the White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities on the agency's progress on its HBCU competitiveness plan.
- Establish and cultivate ongoing relationships with Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI), HSI partners (e.g., White House Initiative on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity for Hispanics), and related cultural partners to build awareness of the NEA, to share critical resources and information, with a focus on funding opportunities, and to build capacity for successful application to the agency from HSIs. To measure the agency's efforts to increase HSI applications, a strategy will be developed to track HSI applicants across disciplines.
- Strengthen nation-to-nation relationships with tribal communities. In October 2021, the NEA published its formal Tribal Consultation Policy.⁴ The policy was built on two nation-to-nation consultations with tribal leaders, and a series of community meetings with Native American and Alaska Native artists and arts/cultural organizations. The policy accords with President Biden's Memorandum on Tribal Consultation and Strengthening Nation-to-Nation Relationships and Executive Order 13175 and has been reviewed and approved by OMB.
- Explore methods to identify the needs of U.S. communities with limited access to arts experiences, so as to better understand their needs and to facilitate collaboration. See the dashboard development strategy discussed in the Evidence-Building section of this plan.
- Combine knowledge, data, and best practices with those of other federal entities serving these populations.

Contributing Programs

Data-driven methods to broaden and deepen engagement with historically underserved communities will be employed across the agency's grantmaking, including the NEA's Grants for Arts Projects. In addition, such methods will be used for Challenge America—grants that offer support primarily to small and mid-sized organizations for projects in all artistic disciplines, extending the arts' reach to underserved populations. Challenge America features an abbreviated application and a robust element of technical assistance.

Cross-Agency Collaborations

- The NEA's participation in the White House Initiative on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity through HBCUs provides opportunity for the agency to share and learn from other agencies' data-driven methods to broaden and deepen engagement with HBCUs and other minority-serving institutions.

⁴ <https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/Tribal%20Consultation%20Policy%20NEA%202021%20Final.pdf>. (Accessed Dec. 20, 2021.)

- By serving on the federal Interagency Working Group for Youth Programs, the NEA will share and learn from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and other federal agencies and departments about successful strategies for engaging with underprivileged youth.
- Through an agreement with the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA), the NEA receives analytical support for monitoring the presence of arts funding across different geographies. These empirical insights will inform Strategic Objective 1.2.

Performance Goals

The performance goals for this objective are:

1. *The NEA increases engagement with potential applicant organizations in underserved communities.*
This goal will be measured by tracking the number of organizations located in underserved communities and that are engaged through technical assistance (e.g., webinars or other events/services) provided by the NEA. Another performance measure will be the percent of applications received and adjudicated from NEA organizations located in underserved communities; a secondary measure will be the success rate for such applications.
2. *The NEA increases engagement with potential applicant organizations that primarily address underserved communities.*
This goal will be measured by tracking the percent of applications received and adjudicated by the NEA from organizations primarily addressing underserved communities; a secondary measure will be the success rate for such applications.

Evidence-Building

In FY 2020, the NEA developed for internal use an interactive map of agency grantmaking and initiatives data, with high-level summary data on agency grant awards. These data include direct grants and subgrants, and national initiative activities for the preceding three-year period. The map, which also includes Census data on poverty and urbanicity, provides contextual information to NEA leadership; it features a dynamic dashboard showing summary statistics of grant funding and activities based on selected regions and other characteristics. This NEA data tool will be updated in FY 2022 to include additional information on underserved communities, including race and ethnicity, and will be updated annually during the term of this strategic plan. Dashboards also will be developed in FY 2022 and made available to agency staff. Easy access to timely, reliable data about agency grantmaking and initiatives is a prerequisite for knowing whom the NEA-supported arts projects are serving, and for better enabling the agency to broaden and deepen engagement with underserved communities.

Additional research and evaluation activities for this objective will be identified annually through the Learning Agenda process.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1.3

Provide Opportunities for People throughout the Country to Participate in Arts Education and to Increase Their Knowledge and Skills in the Arts at All Stages of Life.

By helping to foster public appreciation and understanding of various art forms, genres, and artistic traditions, the NEA will build public capacity for lifelong participation in the arts. For audiences and learners, the outcome will be vibrant and transformative arts experiences. For artists and teachers, the NEA will facilitate the transfer of critical knowledge and skills that will enable them to refine and improve their work.

The arts are essential to a well-rounded education. Numerous studies have revealed the social and emotional benefits of arts education for early childhood development, and the ability of arts education to bridge gaps in academic achievement among teenagers and youth who come from less privileged backgrounds than others. Additionally, arts education contributes to students' acquisition and development of skills (e.g., the "four Cs"—communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and especially creativity) that have been closely associated with 21st-century job requirements. Further along the lifespan, older adults who engage with the arts have reported higher levels of cognitive ability and fewer limitations to their physical functioning.

The agency's grants support arts learning activities across a variety of artistic disciplines for people of all ages. Grants awarded by the NEA Arts Education office support standards-based learning in the arts for K-12 students. However, NEA grants, including from other offices, also support the integration of arts learning with other academic curricula, including STEM disciplines. Beyond grants for student learners, Arts Education grants support professional development opportunities for educators, including but not limited to arts instructors. Additionally, NEA programs such as Poetry Out Loud offer arts learning experiences for high school students (including, in this case, benefits that extend from poetry appreciation to language skills development).

Apprenticeships are time-honored programs allowing master artists to train apprentices, often over an extended period of time. These trainees then have the ability to teach others, sharing what they have learned with their own communities. Formal learning programs of this nature are instrumental in passing on cultural knowledge to the next generation. Through the NEA's continued support of state folklife programs and their apprenticeship awards, the agency ensures that traditional artists have the opportunity to pass on the techniques and cultural knowledge of their art forms, which can be as diverse as Mexican ballet folklórico, Northern Arapaho beadwork, gospel singing, and taiko drumming. The NEA also supports apprenticeships directly through its own grantmaking. As with the NEA's support of the arts and arts education more generally, such apprenticeships form a critical link in connecting economic and labor-related outcomes from artistic practice to communities at large.

Goal Leader/Lead Office

Arts Education Division
Folk & Traditional Arts Division

Strategies

The funding opportunities administered through the NEA's Programs and Partnerships offices are the primary vehicles for the agency's investment in the acquisition of knowledge and skills in the arts at all stages of life.

Through awards and strategic partnerships, the NEA will support:

- Arts learning opportunities across various artistic disciplines, learning environments, and geographic locations
- K-12 standards-based arts education
- Job training programs and/or apprenticeships with master artists or practitioners

Contributing Programs

Projects that bring arts education to the general public are supported across the agency's grantmaking, including the NEA's Grants for Arts Projects program and Partnership Agreement grants to SAAs and RAOs. The agency employs two approaches in its grantmaking for projects focused on providing opportunities to learn in and about the arts. One approach is the grant support offered by the NEA's Arts Education office. Representative project activities include:

- Standards-based arts education activities for pre-K-12 students through long-term, in-depth projects
- Professional development to improve arts instruction by equipping artists, school superintendents, principals, teachers, and other education providers with the skills and confidence to effectively engage students in high-quality arts learning
- Assessments and evaluations of arts learning

The second approach is broader. It supports opportunities for Americans in more informal learning contexts across the lifespan. Representative project activities include:

- Lifelong learning activities for youth, adults, and intergenerational groups
- Online courses and training
- Lectures and symposia
- Production, publication, and distribution of teachers'/ facilitators' guides
- Innovative practices in arts learning for all ages
- Engagement with living artists and designers (e.g., in the classroom and/or through apprenticeships)
- Informal education programs, workshops, and demonstrations
- Arts learning programs for older adults in community settings, residential settings, and healthcare/long-term care settings
- Arts learning programs and approaches that promote full access and participation in the arts for youth and adults with disabilities

In addition, through strategic partnerships, the NEA leads national initiatives that support arts learning. They include:

- Poetry Out Loud, a national recitation competition for high school students. Created by the NEA and the Poetry Foundation, the competition is administered in partnership with the SAAs of all 50 states, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Guam, and American Samoa.
- Shakespeare in American Communities, which supports high-quality theater productions and educational activities in middle schools, high schools, and juvenile justice facilities throughout the United States.
- The Musical Theater Songwriting Challenge, a national contest for high school students with a passion for musical theater songwriting and for the wide range of musical styles represented in contemporary musicals.

Cross-Agency Collaborations

- The Arts Education Partnership (AEP) is the nation's hub for arts and education leaders, building their leadership capacity to support students, educators, and learning environments through research, reporting, counseling, and convening. AEP has been supported by the NEA and the U.S. Department of Education since 1995 and is administered by the Education Commission of the States.

Performance Goals

The performance goals for this objective are:

1. *The NEA engages underserved youth in arts education through activities supported by its awards and partnerships.*
This goal will be measured by tracking the percent of arts education projects located in underserved communities and that directly engaged youth. A secondary measure will be the percent of arts education projects supported by subawards through the NEA's Partnership Agreements, that were located in underserved communities, and that directly engaged youth.

2. *The NEA supports the arts education sector with convenings, research, and technical assistance.*
This goal will be measured by tracking the number of NEA-supported convenings, research products, and technical assistance opportunities made available to the arts education sector.

Evidence-Building

Research and evaluation activities for this objective will be identified annually through the Learning Agenda process.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1.4

Ensure Opportunities for the International Exchange of Artists and Arts and Cultural Traditions.

According to the founding legislation for the NEA, the United States' reputation as a world leader must not "rest solely upon superior power, wealth, and technology, but must be solidly founded upon worldwide respect and admiration for the Nation's high qualities as a leader in the realm of ideas and of the spirit."

Nowhere are these traits better exemplified than in America's artistic and cultural contributions. International demand for U.S. artists and their artworks is best captured by a single statistic. In 2019, the most recent year for which such data are available, the U.S. exported \$33 billion more in arts and cultural goods and services than it imported from other countries.⁵ Unlike many other segments of the nation's economy, arts and culture is running a trade surplus.

By working with the State Department and other entities to enable nation-to-nation exchanges of artists and artworks, the NEA assists in providing U.S. artists and their wares with exposure to international artists and cultural traditions, and to global markets and audiences. Concurrently, international exchanges permit U.S. audiences, artists, and communities to experience vibrant cultural traditions and artists from abroad.

Apart from fostering such exchanges, the NEA communicates regularly with international scholars, policymakers, and arts administrators who seek to learn about U.S. infrastructure for domestic arts programs. All of these activities help to advance the federal government's efforts at cultural diplomacy. They also nourish the capacity of artists and audiences everywhere to realize their shared humanity through various forms of creativity and cultural expression.

Goal Leader/Lead Office

Office of International Activities

Strategies

Through its grantmaking, the NEA will continue to invite project proposals that a) seek to promote the diversity of U.S. artists and artworks for audiences abroad, and/or b) seek to provide U.S. audiences and artists with opportunities to experience international artistry in the U.S. As described below, however, the majority of these activities will occur through strategic partnerships with arts organizations, and in consultation with the U.S. Department of State. The NEA will monitor survey data to ascertain whether the NEA's investments under this objective are resulting in positive experiences by U.S. artists who engage with such programs, and the agency will track the representation of such projects within the NEA's grants portfolio, based on performance targets that will be created alongside this plan.

5 <https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/SummaryReportAccessLinks.pdf>. (Accessed Dec. 9, 2021.)

Contributing Programs

Projects that support opportunities for the international exchange of artists and artworks are supported by the NEA's Grants for Arts Projects program and by Partnership Agreement grants to RAOs. The NEA also contributes, either through funding or administrative support, to the following programs:

- USArtists International, which is committed to ensuring that the impressive range of the performing arts in the U.S. is represented abroad, and that American artists can enhance their creative and professional development through participation at international events.
- The United States/Japan Creative Artists Program, which provides three- to five-month residencies in Japan for five individual creative artists in any discipline. While in Japan, artists work on an individual project which may include the creation of new work or pursuit of their individual artistic goals.
- The Performing Arts Global Exchange, which brings exemplary international music, dance, and theater to audiences across the U.S. Every year a new region of the world is highlighted. Fee-support grants are available to nonprofit presenting venues and units of state, local, or tribal government (based anywhere in the U.S. or its territories) who book artists from a curated roster.
- NEA Literature Fellowships in translation, which awards grants to published translators for rendering specific works of prose, poetry, or drama from other languages into English.
- The Arts & Artifacts Indemnity Program, which provides indemnification against loss or damage for eligible art works, artifacts, and objects in domestic and international exhibitions.

Cross-Agency Collaborations

The NEA's Office of International Activities (OIA) coordinates activity with the U.S. Department of State, especially to connect U.S.-based arts organizations with cultural attachés. Additionally, the OIA is a key point of contact for international cultural visitors from the State Department's International Visitors Leadership Program. OIA works with the State Department's Foreign Service Institute to educate new cultural attaché officers about the NEA as they prepare to report to U.S. Embassy posts.

Historically, too, the NEA has partnered with the State Department by managing the peer review process for the selection of participating U.S. artists and architects for the Venice Biennale, an international art exhibition, and by administering the grant review process for participating arts organizations.

Finally, the NEA periodically coordinates programming with the International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies (IFACCA), a global network of arts councils, ministries of culture, and government agencies representing more than 70 countries that advance arts and culture.

Performance Goals

The performance goal for this objective is:

The NEA supports opportunities for the international exchange of artists and arts and cultural traditions, which yield demonstrable benefits for the arts and artists.

This goal will be measured by tracking the percent of artists participating in the NEA-supported USArtists International program who report benefits for their professional and career development. Secondary measures will be the number of NEA awards that support the international exchange of artists and arts and cultural traditions, and the percent of NEA awards that support the translation of specific works of prose, poetry, or drama from other languages into English.

The NEA intends to examine the impacts of international exchanges on the careers of U.S. artists. Beginning in FY 2022, the NEA will implement an annual survey of grantees under the USArtists International (USAI) program, with a goal of developing a richer understanding of the program’s short- and longer-term impacts on artists’ careers. Additional research and evaluation activities for this objective will be identified annually through the Learning Agenda process.

STRATEGIC GOAL 2

Integrate the Arts with Strategies that Promote the Well-Being and Resilience of People and Communities.

Over the last few years in particular, the nation has been tested with extreme pressure on its healthcare system, its economy and environment, and its sense of fairness and social justice. Throughout such traumas as COVID-19, racial violence, and natural disasters, the arts have been a force for healing and repair. Through direct grantmaking and strategic partnerships, the NEA will continue to support projects that integrate arts-based strategies in health, community development, and emergency preparedness and responsiveness. These systems-based approaches to achieve positive outcomes for towns and neighborhoods already have been central to arts-and-public health initiatives, to the arts’ deployment in disaster relief, to collective efforts to achieve equitable access in arts education, and to a variety of activities known as creative placemaking—the integration of arts, culture, and design with comprehensive community development. This strategic goal will permit more focused investments in communal spaces—but it also will bring greater visibility to the use of design and arts programs and therapies in improving health and well-being for individuals and communities.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2.1

Support Arts Projects with a Focus on Advancing the Health and Well-Being of Individuals.

In partnership with U.S. Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs and state and local arts agencies, the NEA directs Creative Forces[®]: NEA Military Healing Arts Network. The initiative places creative arts therapies at the core of patient-centered care at clinical sites throughout the country, including telehealth services, and increases access to community arts activities to promote health, wellness, and quality of life for military service members, veterans, and their families and caregivers. Furthermore, in partnership with the Mid-America Arts Alliance, the Creative Forces Community Engagement Grant program aims to improve the health, well-being, and quality of life for military-connected populations by empowering creative expression, building social connections, and improving resilience.

The lessons learned from implementing Creative Forces will inform other strategies to advance individual health and well-being through the arts. The networking, technical assistance, and the evaluation and learning that occur across the Creative Forces program are typical of the field-building activities necessary to realize this strategic objective for broader population groups. At the federal level, the NEA models this knowledge transfer by leading the Interagency Task Force on the Arts and Human Development, which meets quarterly to examine research projects and evidence-based practice at the intersection of the arts, health, and human development.

Indeed, apart from Creative Forces, the NEA regularly supports not only creative arts therapies (e.g., art therapy, music therapy, dance/movement therapy, and drama therapy), but also arts-in-health programs that occur in clinical and non-clinical settings. Additionally—through direct grants and through partnerships with SAAs and RAOs—the agency funds arts projects that support healthy aging and healthy childhood and youth development, as well as rehabilitation and recovery for people in trauma, or those in prison or juvenile justice settings.

Goal Leader/Lead Office

Office of the Senior Advisor on Innovation to the Chair
Office of Accessibility
Office of Research & Analysis

Strategies

- Through awards and strategic partnerships, support creative arts therapies or arts-in-health strategies—including projects that seek to assist with healthy aging and healthy childhood and youth development or with rehabilitation or recovery services, or that address currently and/or formerly incarcerated populations.
- Expand the NEA's Creative Forces initiative (through clinical and community-based projects) to new target populations or focus areas within military and veteran populations exposed to trauma. Supporting this effort, the NEA and its partners have conducted discovery-phase literature reviews and scans to better understand the needs of families of military service members and veterans and guard and reserve populations as part of Creative Forces' program development cycle.

In addition, the NEA chair will bring field-specific expertise related to the pursuit of this objective.

Contributing Programs

Projects that integrate the arts with strategies to improve individual health and well-being are supported by the NEA's Grants for Arts Projects program and by Partnership Agreement grants to SAAs and RAOs. In addition, the NEA offers:

- Creative Forces: NEA Military Healing Arts Network, a leadership initiative that seeks to improve the health, well-being, and quality of life for military and veteran populations exposed to trauma, as well as their families and caregivers.
- Shakespeare in American Communities: Juvenile Justice, a leadership initiative in partnership with Arts Midwest, enabling theater companies and organizations to engage youths within the juvenile justice system with the works of Shakespeare through theater education programs nationwide.

Cross-Agency Collaborations

- Creative Forces: NEA Military Healing Arts Network is conducted in partnership with the U.S. Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs and the state and local arts agencies. Current partners also include the Henry M. Jackson Foundation, Americans for the Arts, and Mid- America Arts Alliance.

Performance Goals

The performance goals for this objective are:

1. *The NEA supports projects and partnerships that engage individuals in activities with the intent of advancing their health and well-being through the arts.*
This goal will be measured by tracking the number of people who participated (in person or virtually) in NEA-supported activities focused on advancing the health and well-being of individuals through the arts. Two other performance measures will be the number of service members served by Creative Forces clinical creative arts therapists, and the number of therapeutic encounters facilitated by Creative Forces clinical creative arts therapists.

2. *Through convenings, research, and technical assistance, the NEA supports practitioners, researchers, and policy-makers at the intersection of the arts and health and well-being.*
This goal will be measured by tracking the number of NEA-supported convenings, research products, and technical assistance opportunities made available to practitioners, researchers, and policy-makers seeking to advance individual health and well-being through the arts.

Evidence-Building

Through a cooperative agreement with the Henry M. Jackson Foundation, the Creative Forces program is investing in a comprehensive evaluation of its clinical programs and projects. Investments in these activities will lead to the identification of outcomes associated with Creative Forces clinical programs/projects and will determine the effectiveness of these activities. Evaluation activities also will support continuous improvement and help to ensure that the programs/projects are achieving their goals and objectives. Further, the evaluation findings will be used by Creative Forces and other organizations to determine which Creative Forces clinical programs/projects should be expanded to other sites and populations.

In a similar vein, the Creative Forces Community Engagement Grant program is launching in late FY 2021. Open to nonprofit organizations, units of state or local government, or federally recognized tribes or tribal communities, the program will make awards for non-clinical arts engagement projects for military-connected populations. Starting in FY 2024, data will be collected from subgrantees to monitor the program's outputs, grantee outcomes, and participant outcomes, as well as the role of arts engagement in advancing health, well-being, and quality of life for Creative Forces target populations.

Separately, and with a different population, the NEA will work cooperatively with Arts Midwest in FY 2022 to establish systematic data collections to support performance and outcome measurement for the Shakespeare in American Communities Juvenile Justice (SIAC/JJ) program. Through an agency contract, a data collection plan will be developed and relevant forms prepared and cleared through the federal Paperwork Reduction Act clearance process. The contractor will provide technical assistance, written guidance, and resources that will prepare Arts Midwest to implement the data collection plan.

Additional research and evaluation activities for this objective will be identified annually through the Learning Agenda process.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2.2

Embed the Arts in System-Wide Initiatives that Strengthen or Heal Communities.

Beyond supporting arts projects that advance individual health and well-being, the NEA rewards grassroots partnerships that integrate the arts with long-term strategies to heal a whole community, or to protect or revitalize its natural, cultural, and economic resources. On a local level, these strategies often take the shape of creative placemaking programs—such as those supported by the NEA's Our Town initiative—but they also involve collective impact models that ensure equitable access to arts education within K-12 school systems. Whether such projects contribute to community planning and development, a new national infrastructure for folk and traditional arts, emergency preparedness and recovery, or responses to climate change, they invariably require public-private partnerships that the NEA can help to catalyze and sustain across multiple sectors.

Goal Leader/Lead Office

Design & Creative Placemaking Division
Arts Education Division

Strategies

This strategic objective is envisioned as a growth area for the NEA. For now, through its Arts Education and Design & Creative Placemaking divisions, the NEA supports discrete grant programs that seek to achieve positive outcomes for communities through systems-level change. Beyond these programs, which are described below, the agency will start to welcome grant project proposals that aspire toward systems-level change through the arts. The NEA also will start to welcome projects that use the arts to protect and revitalize natural, cultural, and economic resources within communities; and it will welcome projects related to emergency preparedness planning for arts organizations, the building of their protective capabilities, and trauma response and recovery efforts within communities.

In addition, the NEA chair will bring field-specific expertise related to the pursuit of this objective.

Contributing Programs

Projects that use system-wide approaches to strengthen or heal communities or the environment will be supported by the NEA's Grants for Arts Projects program and by Partnership Agreement grants to SAAs and RAOs. Examples of contributing programs include:

- Arts Education Collective Impact Grants, which transform schools and communities by providing access and engagement in the arts for all students through collective, systemic approaches. Projects aim to ensure that all students across entire neighborhoods, schools, school districts, and/or states—in communities of all sizes—participate in the arts over time.
- Our Town, the NEA's flagship creative placemaking grants program. Through project-based funding, we support projects that integrate arts, culture, and design activities into efforts that strengthen communities by advancing local economic, physical, and/or social outcomes.
- The Mayors' Institute on City Design (MICD), a leadership initiative of NEA in partnership with the United States Conference of Mayors. Since 1986, MICD has helped transform communities through design by preparing mayors to be the chief urban designers of their cities.
- The Citizens' Institute on Rural Design (CIRD), a leadership initiative of the NEA in partnership with the Housing Assistance Council. Focusing on communities with populations of 50,000 or less, CIRD empowers local citizens to use their unique artistic and cultural resources to guide local development and shape the future design of their communities.
- The National Folklife Network, a new NEA strategic partnership that will cultivate the development of seven pilot folklife programs—four in rural areas and three in urban areas. The four rural regions are the Northern Plains, Southern Plains, Intermountain West, and Alaska, while the three urban folklife programs will be in cities on or east of the Mississippi River. Each location faces its own unique challenges, including weak infrastructure, a diffuse population, and deeply ingrained poverty.
- The NEA provides financial support, technical assistance, and national leadership following man-made disasters and natural disasters such as hurricanes and wildfires. NEA staff have deployed multiple times to Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands through the Interior Department and FEMA to work with state and local agencies on assessing and repairing damage to cultural and historical resources and to help advance the recovery of arts and cultural sectors. These functions have included capacity-building for nonprofit arts organizations so they are better prepared for future calamities.

Cross-Agency Collaborations

- Appalachian Gateway Communities Initiative offers targeted technical assistance, cultural heritage and tourism assessments and planning, arts and culture workshops, and small grants for project implementation for these communities. The NEA works in partnership with the Appalachian Regional Commission to support this initiative.

- Save America’s Treasures awards grants to preserve nationally significant historic properties and collections that convey our nation’s rich heritage to future generations. The program is administered by the National Park Service in cooperation with the NEA, the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH).
- The NEA is partnering with the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention and the CDC Foundation to support community-based arts and cultural organizations in engaging the arts to build vaccine confidence nationwide.
- As part of the National Disaster Recovery Framework, the NEA works closely with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the U.S. Department of the Interior, the Economic Development Administration, and other agencies to demonstrate how the arts can revitalize communities after natural and man-made disasters—including those resulting from climate change—and ensure that recovery policies in development include the arts sector. The agency also helps to ensure that the sector has access to recovery resources. The NEA is a supporting agency in the Natural and Cultural Resources Recovery Support Function and has worked extensively with the Economics and the Community Planning and Capacity Building Recovery Support Function teams in response to COVID-19. In addition, the agency is a member of the Heritage Emergency National Task Force, a collaboration between the Smithsonian Institution and FEMA. Beyond these obligations, the NEA serves on the steering committee of the National Coalition for Arts Preparedness and Emergency Response (NCAPER), a public-private partnership that was formed “in response to the significant losses and devastation suffered by artists and creative economies in the wake of 21st century disasters,” as the group’s website notes.
- The NEA participates in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Interagency Working Group on Equitable Long-Term Recovery and Resilience, and in its Analytic Measurement subgroup.

Performance Goals

The performance goals for this objective are:

1. *The NEA supports grassroots partnerships that integrate the arts with long-term strategies to heal a whole community, or to protect or revitalize its natural, cultural, and economic resources.*
This goal will be measured by tracking the number of unique communities, across the strategic plan period (FY 2022-2026), in which organizations were awarded NEA funds for the purpose of embedding the arts in system-wide initiatives that seek to strengthen or heal communities.
2. *Through convenings, research, and technical assistance, the NEA strengthens the integration of the arts in system-wide initiatives.*
This goal will be measured by tracking the number of NEA-supported convenings, research products, and technical assistance opportunities made available to practitioners, researchers, and policy-makers seeking to integrate the arts with system-wide initiatives to strengthen and heal communities.

Evidence-Building

Research and evaluation activities for this objective will be identified annually through the Learning Agenda process.

STRATEGIC GOAL 3

Build Capacity and Infrastructure within the Arts Sector through Knowledge-Sharing, Tools, Resources, and Evidence-Based Practices.

Arts organizations, funders, and cultural policy-makers frequently look to the NEA for guidance on issues confronting the arts sector, and for research and information that can support their practice. Especially in the wake

of the COVID-19 pandemic and related economic hardships, the arts sector will require greater leadership, empirical insights, and technological capacity to rebuild better while serving all people and communities nationwide.

For the third consecutive five-year period, the NEA will launch a research agenda seeking to promote research about the value and impact of the arts. In conjunction with these projects, the NEA will support the creation and distribution of evidence-based guides, data tools, and other resources to assist cultural researchers and practitioners.

Leadership development for emerging, mid-career, and late-career arts leaders at organizations of all sizes will be essential to the arts sector's sustainability. Through grantmaking and strategic partnerships, the NEA will support these training opportunities in order for arts professionals to better navigate a shifting landscape for nonprofit arts organizations and their beneficiaries.

In response to other recent changes to the U.S. arts landscape, the agency will heighten investments in projects that use digital technology in the creation and/or delivery of art. Greater support for tech-centered artistic practice and for digital capacity-building within arts organizations also can yield positive results for diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. This type of support will help to bridge digital divides within different segments of the arts sector—even as it will allow artists and audiences to contribute to and benefit from technological breakthroughs in arts creation and delivery.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3.1

Support the Development of Skills and Strategies that Will Enable Arts Leaders to Manage More Effective Organizations and Agencies.

Although the NEA is primarily a grantmaking agency, it also provides leadership within the broader arts ecosystem—as noted in Strategic Objective 3.2, which emphasizes research and communications in the field. Another form of assistance centers on professional development and training opportunities for arts leaders.

Several factors have contributed to a demand for new and different skills and competencies for arts leaders than may have been required in the past. These factors include the following needs: to lead arts organizations effectively in a post-COVID-19 environment; to promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in the arts; and to ensure continuity of skills acquisition and learning for successive generations of arts leaders, including those working in policy and practice at the crossroads of the arts and other sectors (e.g., health, community development, the environment). To help fulfill such needs, the NEA will support peer-to-peer learning groups and workshops for arts administrators.

Goal Leader/Lead Office

Office of the Deputy Chair for Programs & Partnerships

Strategies

Through awards or strategic partnerships, the NEA will support:

- Development of a peer-to-peer network of experienced and emerging arts leaders.
- Technical assistance workshops in arts management, professional development and career transitions, grant writing, and board development.

In addition, the NEA chair will bring field-specific expertise related to the pursuit of this objective.

Contributing Programs

The NEA supports arts leadership training opportunities through the Grants for Arts Projects program and through Partnership Agreement grants to SAAs and RAOs. In addition, the NEA currently offers the following initiatives:

- The Creative Placemaking Technical Assistance Program is designed to help Our Town grantees and prospective applicants to the program implement successful creative placemaking projects that lay the groundwork for longer-term systems change.
- The annual Professional Development Institute for SAA arts education and folk and traditional arts managers, providing meaningful leadership development and technical assistance for this field.
- The State Education Agencies Directors of Arts Education (SEDAE), an annual leadership grant that supports professional development for state education agency directors of arts education.

Cross-Agency Collaborations

Regarding this objective, the NEA will explore—during the strategic plan period (FY 2022-2026)—formal and informal partnerships with federal entities such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Department for Housing & Urban Development, and the General Services Administration.

Performance Goals

The performance goal for this objective is:

The NEA supports the development of skills and strategies that will enable arts leaders to manage more effective organizations and agencies.

This goal will be measured by tracking the number of grantees reporting that NEA funding enabled them to build the capacity to manage more effective organizations and agencies. Another performance measure will be the percent of participants expressing satisfaction with the quality and value of services provided through NEA-supported leadership training and technical assistance initiatives (e.g., convenings, curricular assets).

Evidence-Building

Research and evaluation activities for this objective will be identified annually through the Learning Agenda process.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3.2

Produce Research, Statistics, and General Information about the Arts for the Benefit of the Arts Sector and Beyond.

In addition to supporting leadership training and skills development within the wider arts sector, the NEA builds capacity for arts organizations through research and evaluation. Evidence-based practice guides, literature reviews, and statistical reports can assist arts organizations in more equitably serving the American public. The NEA also supports studies about the value and impact of the arts to individuals. This category of research can boost public recognition of the arts' benefits for society—thus validating the work of artists and arts organizations in terms meaningful to funders, policymakers, and cross-sectoral partners.

Beyond using research and evaluation to measure the arts' impacts, or to promote effective practices in the arts, the NEA communicates constantly with the arts and cultural sector and the general public about a range of topics, themes, programs, and opportunities in the arts. The NEA's Office of Public Affairs publishes this content on traditional and social media platforms, facilitates interviews between NEA staff and media outlets to further promote the arts, and supports convenings, speeches, and other events featuring the NEA. The NEA's website carries up-to-date information and resources for audiences and organizations from all backgrounds.

Goal Leader/Lead Office

Office of Research & Analysis
Office of Public Affairs

Strategies

1. Through dedicated staff and awards and strategic partnerships, support priority goals aligning with the NEA's five-year Research Agenda.
 - Award guidelines for the Research Grants in the Arts and NEA Research Labs programs encourage:
 - experimental and quasi-experimental studies of the arts' impact on the health and human development of individuals, on education, and on economic growth and innovation; and
 - studies using diverse methodologies (including community-based participatory research) to examine the following topics: the arts' role in community healing and transformation; diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in the arts; and the changing arts ecology.
 - Through the Creative Forces clinical program, support studies and publications about the impact of creative arts therapies on the health and wellness of military and veteran populations.
 - Through research partnerships with the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the National Science Foundation (NSF), the U.S. Census Bureau, and the Bureau of Economic Analysis, support research awards and/or data collection or analysis that will benefit arts practitioners and others.
 - Through staff-conducted research and analysis, or through contracts, publish periodic research reports, briefs, and data visualizations that support the NEA Research Agenda.
2. Develop evidence-based tools and research and data resources that will benefit communities of artistic practice.
 - In award guidelines for the Research Grants in the Arts and NEA Research Labs programs, encourage development of these products and services for the greater arts community.
 - Engage a Technical Assistance Center to support evaluation, learning, and data science for arts practitioners at different levels of size and capacity.
 - Through the Creative Forces clinical and community engagement programs, support a National Resource Center featuring resources and information for creative arts therapists and community arts practitioners.
 - Through the Arts Education Partnership, support ArtsEdSearch, a clearinghouse of research about arts education.
 - Through the Sound Health Network, support a national clearinghouse of studies about music, neuroscience, health, and wellness, and promote networking and learning opportunities for researchers and practitioners at this intersection.
 - Engage a National Arts Statistics & Evidence-Based Reporting Center to serve alongside the NEA's National Archive of Data on Arts & Culture.
3. Through the NEA website and traditional and social media, showcase and discuss exemplary arts practices and projects, including but not limited to those supported by the NEA.
 - Place high-impact stories about NEA-funded activities in newspapers and magazines nationwide, place op-eds by the chair as appropriate, and monitor press coverage of the NEA specifically and of the arts generally.
 - Use social media channels to directly reach hundreds of thousands of people regarding important arts happenings and issues.

- Use the NEA’s blog and podcast series to provide information on exemplary art projects and artists across the country, encourage arts participation, and engage the public in national conversations about the arts to demonstrate their importance to individuals and communities.
 - Use the NEA’s magazine, *American Artscape*, to present detailed information on exemplary arts projects and artists across the country, showing how the arts impact communities large and small across the nation.
 - Produce and distribute fact sheets, infographics, and publications about various NEA programs and activities.
 - Produce and distribute monthly newsletters to constituents to update them on NEA activities, issues in the arts, new arts content on the NEA website and elsewhere on the internet, and upcoming events.
4. Convene arts practitioners, researchers, funders, and policymakers to network and discuss timely issues in the arts.
- Use webcasts to make the National Council on the Arts meetings open to the public; to broadcast special convenings on the arts in various artistic disciplines; and to share special NEA events with the public.
 - Make the NEA chair and discipline directors available in traditional and social media to discuss arts issues and position the NEA as a leader in the arts sector.
 - Work with the chair’s and chief of staff’s offices, as well as other NEA staff on travel throughout the United States, to encourage media coverage of events that demonstrate how the NEA supports the arts in American communities.

In addition, the NEA chair will bring field-specific expertise related to the pursuit of this objective.

Contributing Programs

- Research Grants in the Arts fund research studies that investigate the value and/or impact of the arts, either as individual components of the U.S. arts ecology or as they interact with each other and/or with other domains of American life.
- NEA Research Labs fund transdisciplinary research teams grounded in the social and behavioral sciences, yielding empirical insights about the arts for the benefit of arts and non-arts sectors alike.
- Sound Health Network is a partnership of the NEA with the University of California, San Francisco in collaboration with the NIH and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. The Sound Health Network was established to promote research and public awareness about the impact of music on health and wellness.
- Creative Forces[®]: NEA Military Healing Arts Network invests in clinical research on the impacts and benefits—physical, social, and emotional—of creative arts therapies as innovative treatment methods.
- The Arts Education Partnership (AEP) operates ArtsEdSearch, an online database of research focused on the outcomes of arts education. AEP is supported by the NEA and the U.S. Department of Education and administered by the Education Commission of the States.
- Creative Economy State Profiles and a database of state-level studies of the creative economy are maintained by NASAA, under an agreement with the NEA.
- The National Arts Statistics & Evidence-Based Reporting Center will analyze and report on national arts-related datasets according to a published schedule, and will produce evidence-based practice guides and topical reports for arts practitioners.
- The National Archive of Data on Arts & Culture is a NEA-funded public repository of arts-related datasets and publications.

Cross-Agency Collaborations

- The Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA) is a cross-sectional survey that occurs roughly every five years in partnership with the U.S. Census Bureau. In addition, the NEA partners with the Census Bureau to conduct a short-form version—the Arts Basic Survey— between waves of the SPPA.
- The U.S. Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Account is directed in partnership with the Bureau of Economic Analysis to report, on a yearly basis, national and state-level data about the arts’ contributions to the U.S. economy.
- Sound Health, a partnership between the John F. Kennedy Performing Arts Center and the NIH, in association with the NEA, promotes research and public awareness about the potential impact of music on neuroscience, health, and well-being. In partnership with NIH, the NEA supports research grants on “Music and Health.”
- Currently, the NEA is partnering with the NSF to support a research workshop on the value of the arts to computer science education. The NEA also partners with NSF in supporting an Arts Module on the periodic General Social Survey.
- The Interagency Task Force on the Arts and Human Development, a group consisting of members from 15 federal entities, strives to encourage more and better research on how the arts can help people reach their full potential at all stages of life.

Performance Goals

The performance goals for this objective are as follows:

1. *The NEA promotes the arts and engages with communities in every state, territory, and the District of Columbia through traditional media, social media, and the agency’s website and publications.*
This goal will be measured by tracking the percent of states and U.S. jurisdictions, including the District of Columbia, in which NEA-related articles appeared in news outlets. Another performance measure will be to track the percent of states and U.S. jurisdictions whose residents interact with the NEA through the agency’s website.
2. *The NEA advances research in the arts through the social and behavioral sciences to investigate priority topics established in the agency’s five-year research agenda.*
This goal will be measured by tracking the percent of NEA website users who express satisfaction with the value of research information and publications on the agency’s website. Another performance measure will track the mean citation rate for projects resulting from NEA awards for research.

The NEA also will explore the ability to report, during this strategic plan period, on the various ways in which NEA-supported research is used by scholars, practitioners, and policy-makers within and outside the arts. Primary methods for understanding these factors may include the survey mentioned above, and/or qualitative analyses of narrative data collected through NEA research grantee reports.

Evidence-Building

The NEA’s five-year Research Agenda (FY 2022-2026), which stemmed from a planning study and consultations with internal and external stakeholders, articulates priority topics and sample questions that will guide the agency’s investments in knowledge-building about the value and/or impact of the arts in American life. This agenda is distinct from the NEA’s Learning Agenda, which is used to identify and pursue research questions pertaining to the agency’s own activities and operations. For example, future evaluation of progress on the NEA’s research agenda, and of the agenda’s ability to affect the work of policy-makers and practitioners in the arts nationwide, may be included ultimately as a Learning Agenda item.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3.3

Invest in the Capacity of Arts Organizations and Artists to Serve a Broader Public through Digital or Emergent Technology.

For decades, artists and arts organizations have experimented with the use of digital and emergent technology as a creative medium, creating a dynamic but consistently under-resourced field of artistic practice. A NEA research report, *Tech as Art: Supporting Artists Who Use Technology as a Creative Medium* (2021), analyzes this field and the historic barriers and opportunities that have defined it. The report also highlights the cross-sectoral practices of tech-centered artists, their engagement with the larger societal issues of our time—ranging from racial justice to climate change—and their capacity to network and innovate.

Although data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis suggest that web streaming and web publishing are among the highest-growth categories of all arts-related industries, the work of tech-centered artists is poorly represented across the U.S. arts funding landscape, as shown by the Tech as Art report. And yet, the inclusion of these artists in the work of arts organizations promoting different artistic disciplines has become more critical than ever, now that the COVID-19 pandemic has forever altered the shape of arts programming and presentation. As in-person events came to a halt in early 2020, organizations were forced to turn to digital and hybrid programming. Over the next few years, the NEA will invest in greater capacity for arts organizations and artists to harvest lessons from the pandemic and offer digital opportunities for arts participation—inclusive of hybrid programming—to reach a broader and more diverse public.

Goal Leader/Lead Office

Media Arts Division

Strategies

Through awards and strategic partnerships, the NEA will support:

- Tech-centered creative practices and artist-driven explorations of digital or emergent technology across all artistic disciplines.
- Arts organizations' capacity to deliver tech-centered, digital, and hybrid arts and cultural programs to audiences and learners.
- Opportunities for professional development in tech-centered creative practices.
- The exploration of field-building initiatives that develop networks across artistic disciplines and relevant entities for investing in tech-centered creative practices and artist-driven use of digital or emergent technology.
- The exploration of strategies to share information among peer networks—and to raise awareness about—creative solutions and best practices for using digital technology, including accessibility requirements for websites, virtual programs, and other tech-centered activities.

Contributing Programs

Projects that support tech-centered artistic practice and greater opportunities for arts participation via technology are supported by the NEA's Grants for Arts Projects program and by Partnership Agreement grants to SAAs and RAOs. This support is provided across all artistic disciplines.

In particular, through the Media Arts office, organizations can apply for funds to support digital and emergent technology projects across any artistic field, from dance, musical theater, and visual arts to arts education initiatives. The Media Arts program has a stated priority to support exemplary models and emerging practices in

digital storytelling; performance, visual, and cinematic arts; net art, or art that uses the internet as its medium; as well as immersive and interactive media, open-source software toolkits, and other forms of data visualization or computation, across all artistic disciplines, genres, and forms.

In addition, the NEA's Media Arts office and Office of Research & Analysis have conducted a national field scan on arts and technology, in partnership with the Ford Foundation and the Knight Foundation. The resulting publication, *Tech as Art: Supporting Artists Who Use Technology as a Creative Medium* (2021), is accompanied by ten commissioned essays from arts practitioners. The materials highlight historic barriers and opportunities for the field—illustrating, for example, how tech-centered creative practice can support greater equity and inclusion in STEM learning.

Cross-Agency Collaborations

- Through a cooperative agreement in partnership with the Sundance Institute, the NEA supports a national field-building network that promotes filmmaker-friendly policies, best practices, and strategies and creates a sustainable infrastructure that will strengthen the independent film and new media field through knowledge exchange, cross-sector collaboration, and research.
- Currently, the NEA is partnering with the NSF to support a research workshop on the value of the arts to computer science education.

Performance Goals

The performance goal for this objective is:

NEA grantees report that NEA funding enabled them to build the capacity for serving a broader public through digital or emergent technology or for supporting tech-centered creative practices.

This goal will be measured by tracking the number of grantees reporting that NEA funding enabled them to build capacity serving a broader public through digital or emergent technology. Another performance measure will track the number of grantees reporting that NEA funding enabled them to build capacity for supporting tech-centered creative practices.

Evidence-Building

The need to collect higher-quality data on virtual arts engagement increased as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to an unprecedented expansion of virtual arts programming. Since FY 2015, the agency has asked awardees to report the number of unique visitors that accessed online programming and mobile applications during the award period. As a result of data quality concerns over the years, the NEA has periodically made small modifications to these indicators. During this strategic plan period, and due to the growing need for finer-tuned measures of virtual engagement, the NEA expects to make a significant effort to improve how awardees are currently asked about virtual engagement activities.

Additional research and evaluation activities for this objective will be identified annually through the Learning Agenda process.

STRATEGIC GOAL 4

Pursue and Adopt Exemplary Practices to Support the Agency's Mission.

The NEA is a small, independent federal agency with a big impact and is committed to effectively carrying out its mission. The NEA is a responsible steward of its resources, building a workforce that is committed to its mission and service to the American people, and using resources such as technology strategically.

The NEA is the sole arts funding entity, public or private, whose funding reaches every Congressional District in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. jurisdictions, supporting activities within the arts and culture sector such as arts presentations, artist residencies, arts education and healing arts projects, research, creative placemaking, and technical assistance for organizational capacity building. With such an ambitious mission and extensive roster of programmatic activities, the NEA can succeed only because of its commitment to its employees and organizational excellence. Creating and maintaining a highly functioning organization allows the NEA to fulfill its considerable responsibilities to the American people.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4.1

Continue to be Accountable and Transparent to the Public through Effective Operations that Promote Vigilant Stewardship of Funds.

Bearing in mind the NEA's accountability to U.S. taxpayers, and to facilitate its mission, the NEA's staff engage in work practices and design work systems to be effective, efficient, measurable, and transparent. The agency maintains and continually improves upon policies, processes, and systems that ensure optimal transparency and accountability. Chief among these is the NEA's grant application review process, at the heart of which are review panels comprised of citizen panels—both experts in the various arts fields, as well as laypersons with knowledge in the relevant fields.

Goal Leader/Lead Office

Office of Deputy Chair for Management & Budget
Office of Information Technology Management
Office of Guidelines & Panel Operations

Strategies

- Ensure use and effectiveness of the grant adjudication processes through sound panel selection and review processes.
 - Ensure adequate diversity and geographic representation on agency panels.
 - Streamline panel processes and facilitate increased accessibility for panelists to participate in the process.
- Invest in technology solutions to enable efficient, effective, accurate, accessible, and secure business operations in remote and office locations.
 - Improve cloud-based information technology operations.
 - Ensure the security of NEA information technology systems and the data they contain.
 - Ensure 508 compliance and full accessibility of systems and hardware for employees and the public.
 - Leverage proven systems and operations through shared services, e.g., financial management services through the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Enterprise Services Center (ESC), electronic grants management system (eGMS) through the NEH, and electronic travel services through ESC.
 - Inform agency staff about real-time technology changes.
- Monitor agency processes to ensure efficient, effective internal controls, integrity of work products, and compliance with NEA policies and government laws and regulations.
 - Annually review agency enterprise risk strategies and identify risk areas that need enhancement.

- Conduct regular reviews of the NEA's data systems to verify accuracy and compliance with the Privacy Act and records retention policies.
- Assess our work processes, work flow, and current internal controls to improve upon the transparency, accessibility, and effectiveness of our operations.
- Cooperate fully with government oversight officials and auditors in their work to support good governance and promote risk mitigation activities.
- Improve the NEA's compliance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. § 794d), as amended by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (P.L. 105-220).
- Provide timely, accurate, informative, and accessible data through agency reporting, website updates, publications, and other materials.
 - Make data about grant awards, contracts, and research readily available to the public on the NEA website, USASpending.gov, and the National Archive of Data on Arts & Culture website.
 - Improve the quality of the NEA's administrative data, including data collected through NEA grant programs and from the NEA's national initiatives through a review and alignment of data elements across agency application and reporting forms.
 - Provide meaningful access for Limited English Proficiency individuals to NEA programs through increased translation of agency webpages and materials into other languages.

Cross-Agency Collaborations

The NEA collaborates with numerous agencies in pursuit of effective operations that promote vigilant stewardship of public funds. As an example, the NEA partners with similarly sized NEH in developing and operating the eGMS at a fraction of the cost of purchasing the service from one of the large agency- shared providers.

The NEA also leverages proven systems and operations through the use of numerous shared service agreements, with the larger ones including financial services through the FAA's ESC, employee payroll and benefit processing through the Department of Agriculture's National Finance Center, contracting services and Indirect Cost Rate agreement negotiations through the Department of the Interior's Business Center, and travel services through ESC. The agency continually reviews operations to identify opportunities for partnering with government service providers to implement more efficient and cost- effective processes.

Performance Goals

The performance goals for this objective are:

1. *The NEA is a vigilant steward of funds through accountable, transparent, and effective operations.*
This goal will ensure annual receipt of an unmodified audit opinion and that the data and deliverables submitted to USASpending.gov and other required federal data systems are certified as accurate, complete, and in accordance with government-wide data standards. Another performance measure will track improvements to the agency's cybersecurity posture through the development and implementation of a zero-trust architecture and by upgrading the agency's infrastructure in alignment with the agency's multi-year IPV6 migration plan.
2. *The NEA recruits and engages citizens as panelists who reflect the nation's geographic and racial/ ethnic diversity.*
This goal will be measured by tracking the percent of U.S. states and territories, including the District of Columbia, represented by individuals serving on NEA panels. Secondary measures are the percent of individuals, by race/ethnicity, serving on NEA panels; and the percent of NEA panelists who express satisfaction with their participation in the panel process.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4.2

Foster a Skilled, Agile, Diverse, and Cohesive Workforce.

Believing that the agency's most important asset is its people, NEA is committed to embedding principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, and access into the agency's work practices, to foster a safe place for employees to thrive. The NEA also invests in training, and staff recognition programs, and promotes strong employee morale and work-life balance in order to attract, develop, and retain a talented and diverse staff who are empowered and equipped to execute a shared mission and vision for the agency.

Goal Leader/Lead Office

Office of the Deputy Chair of Management & Budget
Office of Human Resources
Office of Civil Rights and Equal Employment Opportunity

Strategies

Strategies supporting this objective include staff recruitment, development, and retention strategies and actions to ensure optimal work conditions for the NEA workforce. Specific strategies include:

- Recruit and retain a highly motivated, diverse, and talented workforce.
 - Review staffing and succession plans to ensure adequate internal capability to meet current and future agency goals, and analyze these goals in conjunction with diversity and outreach goals.
 - Thoroughly analyze vacancy opportunities and potential areas for recruitment and areas where diversity can be enhanced.
 - Consistently consider a variety of hiring options and available flexibilities to recruit a talented and diverse workforce able to meet the NEA's mission.
 - Comply with OPM recruitment requirements to include consideration of current NEA qualified employees for employment opportunities.
 - Provide opportunity for staff input on planning/policies/processes across the agency.
- Ensure that all agency staff are developed and trained for opportunities to succeed while employed at the NEA.
 - Communicate and provide targeted opportunities for staff professional development and career advancement within the NEA.
 - Require managers and supervisors to annually communicate and work with their respective employees to develop comprehensive individual development plans that bolster strengths and minimize weaknesses so that employees are able to perform at peak levels.
 - Seek out innovative training and employee development methods that are compatible with the unique mission of the agency, including cross-training opportunities.
- Develop and maintain a work environment that is safe, diverse, and inclusive, with an emphasis on open communication and the well-being of NEA staff.
 - Develop work, health, and safety protocols, and policies and procedures designed to keep employees safe and thriving during the COVID-19 pandemic and post-pandemic period.
 - Ensure that all employees are trained annually in various aspects of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.

- Maintain a no-tolerance policy for any behavior that infringes on the principles of achieving racial diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in NEA operations.
- Engage and foster free-flowing and open communication with staff regarding NEA activities.

In addition, the NEA chair will bring field-specific expertise related to the pursuit of this objective.

Contributing Programs

In addition to government-wide benefits—including the NEA’s Incentive & Awards Program, which consistently recognizes valuable performers for their efforts and achievements—other programs include family-friendly leave policies and flexible/alternative work schedules (including telework when appropriate). The NEA also provides wellness services—both health center access and an expansive Employee Assistance Program, through an interagency agreement with Federal Occupational Health. Similarly, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the NEA has participated in cross-agency meetings (e.g., the Small Agency Council) and has consulted informally with other agencies on best practices for addressing the effect of COVID-19 on workplace operations and workplace safety.

Cross-Agency Collaborations

The NEA manages its workforce with support from other government agencies. In addition to the support in payroll processing provided by the NFC discussed under Objective 4.1, the NEA also works on staff recruitment with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) through an interagency agreement. The NEA works with the NEH to provide staff programs in connection with special emphasis observances implemented by Presidential Proclamation, Executive Orders, and Public Law, such as African American History Month, Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, and National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

Performance Goals

The performance goal for this objective is:

NEA employees report a positive work culture and a high degree of satisfaction working at the NEA.

This performance goal will be measured by tracking index scores for employee engagement and intrinsic work experience on OPM’s annual Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey.⁶

CROSS-CUTTING OBJECTIVE

The NEA will Model Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Arts through All of Its Activities and Operations.

In its founding legislation, the NEA was charged with the responsibility of widening the availability of art, particularly to historically underserved populations—those whose opportunities to experience the arts are limited by geography, ethnicity, economics, or disability. Since its creation, the NEA has dedicated resources, developed leadership initiatives, and strengthened its partnerships with SAAs and RAOs to realize the agency’s mission to foster and sustain an environment in which the arts belong to everyone in the United States.

The NEA continues to make progress in lifting barriers to arts participation across the nation. Most recently, an analysis showed that more than 43 percent of arts activities sponsored by NEA grants are held in census tracts where 20 percent or more of the population live below the poverty line. In addition, the NEA’s Partnership Agreement grants to SAAs and RAOs include funds for responding to the needs of underserved populations within states and regions.

⁶ Adjustments to this measure may be required if FEVS indexes are changed in future years.

The agency will monitor the distribution of grants in support of widening its reach among diverse demographic, geographic, and socioeconomic groups. It also will explore methods for tracking and enlarging the diversity of organizations represented in the NEA's applicant pool and grants portfolio. Related factors may include the demographic characteristics associated with applicant/grantee organizations, their missions, budget sizes, geographic locations, and first-time applicant status.

This cross-cutting objective also refers to the NEA's internal operations. In its day-to-day functioning, the agency aspires to model the principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility and equal employment opportunity principles to ensure effective management and accountability of federal resources.

Goal Leader/Lead Office

Office of Civil Rights and Equal Employment Opportunity

Strategies

To support this cross-cutting objective, the NEA will hew closely to the Equity Action Plan it submitted to OMB in January 2022. The document outlines new and ongoing activities, potential barriers, and mechanisms for tracking progress on equity in five domains: arts participation in underserved communities; community engagement; accessibility; data; and contracting and procurement. In FY 2023, moreover, the NEA will develop a long-term monitoring and evaluation strategy using outcomes data to assess overall effectiveness of the Equity Action Plan.

In addition, the NEA chair will bring field-specific expertise related to the pursuit of this objective.

Regarding staff operations as a whole, the NEA will establish a model Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) program that will serve as the foundation on which the agency will execute its mission. Integral to this program will be the creation of a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Strategic Plan and the monitoring of its implementation.

Contributing Programs

Among the agency's funding programs, Grants for Arts Projects (to eligible organizations), Challenge America, and Partnership Agreement grants (to SAAs and RAOs) are expected to contribute toward the accomplishment of this cross-cutting objective.

The Office of Accessibility will coordinate with agency offices and the public to ensure access to the grant process, agency programs, and public engagement for people with disabilities.

Internally, the NEA's EEO program will be a significant contributor to this cross-cutting objective. The EEO office serves as a resource to agency managers and employees by providing direction, guidance, and monitoring of key activities to achieve a diverse workplace free of barriers to equal opportunity. The NEA's EEO program thus will help to maintain a workplace free from discrimination in any of its management policies, practices, or procedures, better enabling the agency to pursue its mission. In addition, the EEO office co-leads trans-agency working groups that will implement the NEA's Equity Action Plan and will develop a DEIA Strategic Plan.

Cross-Agency Collaborations

NEA staff routinely participate in the following Executive Agency-level groups:

- OMB Equity Learning Community
- White House Equity Legal Working Group

Performance Goals

The performance goals for this cross-cutting objective are:

1. *The NEA supports projects and partnerships that engage populations reflecting the nation's demographic, geographic, and socioeconomic diversity.*
This goal will be measured by tracking the percent of NEA awards supporting projects that engaged diverse demographic groups. A secondary measure will track the percent of subawards, through Partnership Agreements, supporting project activities that engaged diverse demographic groups. Two other performance measures will track: the percent of Congressional Districts in which organizations receive a NEA award; and the percent of NEA awards that supported project activities in rural areas or high-poverty neighborhoods. A secondary measure will track the percent of subawards that supported project activities in rural areas or high-poverty neighborhoods.
2. *The NEA will establish a model EEO program based on development of internal benchmarks.*
This goal will be measured by tracking the completion of the six essential elements for a model EEO program as described in MD-715.⁷

Evidence-Building

Through the grant application and final report processes, the agency collects self-reported data on the beneficiaries of federal funds awarded through its direct grant and Partnership Agreement programs. These records, however, do not include data on all the populations featured in the President's Executive Order (EO) on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities. In addition, the agency does not currently collect data on the leadership or staff of awardee organizations.

During FY 2022, the NEA will undertake projects to improve data collection methods that can support diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) indicators. The agency will determine the feasibility of creating new fields on its grantmaking forms (including for SAAs and RAOs) to collect better data on the populations served, and, to the extent appropriate, on the leadership and staff of applicant and grantee organizations. The NEA further will expand its analytical capability to use existing data sources for identifying and reporting on underserved communities. Additional research and evaluation activities for this objective will be identified annually through the Learning Agenda process.

⁷ MD-715's model EEO program, pursuant to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII), as amended, 42 U.S.C. § 2000e et seq., and Section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended, 29 U.S.C. § 791 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 (Pub. L. 110-325).

