



National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)

Request

- We join the larger humanities community—including the National Humanities Alliance and the Federation of State Humanities Councils—in urging Congress to provide at least \$155 million for the NEH in FY 2019.

Introduction

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) is an independent federal agency created by Congress in 1965. Grants are awarded to nonprofit educational institutions—including museums, colleges, universities, archives and libraries—for educational programming and the care of collections, in addition to annual grants to state humanities councils located in every state and U.S. territory.

Talking Points

- In FY 2017, as a whole, the National Endowment for the Humanities awarded 743 grants totaling over \$70 million to institutions across the U.S., including museums. Many of NEH’s divisions and offices support museums:
 - NEH’s Division of Public Programs offers grants that bring the ideas and insights of the humanities to life in museums and other spaces by supporting exhibitions, community conversations, and place-based history. Additionally, Positions in the Public Humanities supplements provide professional development opportunities for new museums professionals.
 - NEH’s Division of Preservation and Access provides funding to museums for a variety of efforts to preserve and provide access to our nation’s rich cultural heritage.
 - NEH’s Division of Education Programs support efforts to bring educators into museums for intensive summer training programs on humanities topics.
 - NEH’s Office of Digital Humanities offers grants to support innovations in technology at museums, universities, and other institutions.
 - Beginning again in 2018, Challenge Grants will offer matching grants to support capacity building and infrastructure projects at museums.
- Demand for humanities project support, as demonstrated by NEH grant application rates, far exceeds available funding. In FY 2016, NEH received 5,304 competitive grant applications representing \$518.2 million in requested funds, but was only able to fund 16 percent of these peer-reviewed proposals.
- In calendar year 2017, 232 NEH-funded permanent and traveling exhibitions were open around the nation, providing life-long learning opportunities to a wide public audience.
- Humanities councils in every state and U.S. territory sponsor family literacy programs, speakers’ bureaus, cultural heritage tourism, exhibitions, and live performances. In 2017, 55 state councils supported 2,222 exhibitions, 185 preservation projects, and 1,585 local history programs, attracting a total audience of close to 7 million people.

Status

- NEH is funded through the Interior & Environment appropriations bill. It is currently funded by a continuing resolution at FY 2017 levels until final FY 2018 totals are agreed upon.
- The president’s FY 2019 budget proposed eliminating NEH, only allocating funding for “orderly closeout.”
- The House of Representatives proposed \$145 million for NEH in FY 2018; the Senate proposed level funding.

NEH Funding History (in millions)

	FY 10	FY 11	FY 12	FY 13 CR*	FY 14	FY 15	FY 16	FY 17	FY 18	FY 19 President’s Request
Appropriation	\$167.5	\$154.7	\$146	\$146	\$146	\$146	\$147.9	\$149.8	TBD	\$42.3

*In FY 2013, across-the-board sequestration cuts reduced NEH’s effective funding to \$138.4 million.