



## 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 \$170 million for the NEH in FY 2021.

### 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 2019, as a whole, the National Endowment for the Humanities awarded 701 grants totaling more than \$72.4 million to institutions across the U.S., including museums. All of NEH's divisions and offices support museums:
  - The Office of Challenge Grants offers matching grants to support much needed capacity building and infrastructure projects at museums.
  - The 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 museum professionals.
  - The Division of Preservation and Access provides funding to museums for efforts to preserve and provide access to our nation's rich cultural heritage.
  - The Division of Education Programs supports programs that bring educators to museums for intensive summer training programs on humanities topics.
  - The Office of Digital Humanities offers grants to support innovations in technology at museums, universities, and other institutions.
  - The Division of Research supports scholarly research that many museums use to inform exhibitions and public programming.
- In calendar year 2018, 218 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 2018, 55 state councils supported 2,389 exhibitions, 10,097 discussion events, 166 preservation projects, and 769 local history programs. In total, all state council programs reached an audience of more than 137 million people. State councils also awarded more than 3,000 grants to partners in their communities.
- In preparation for the U.S. Semiquincentennial in 2026, NEH's new "A More Perfect Union" initiative provides funding opportunities across the agency's seven grantmaking divisions for humanities projects that promote a deeper understanding of American history and culture and that advance civic education and knowledge of our core principles of government. As part of the initiative, most of NEH's grant programs include special encouragements to applications related to the United States' 250th anniversary. The agency has also partnered with the U.S. Department of Education to support a national convening to



assess the state of civics education and knowledge of American history in K-12 education, and created new funding opportunities to support cultural infrastructure projects.

- For 12 years NEH has supported important sustainability work on [energy efficiency projects in collections care](#).
- In 2018 and 2020 NEH made research and development grants for planning and implementation of a life cycle assessment project examining the human health and environmental impacts of chemicals and materials used in collections care and exhibition.

**Status**

- The National Endowment for the Humanities is funded through the Interior & Environment appropriations bill. The final FY 2020 spending deal provided \$162.25 million, an increase of \$7.25 million over 2019. Both the House and the Senate had approved increases in funding, though the House’s bill, at \$167.5 million, was higher than the Senate’s.
- As in past years, the president’s FY 2021 budget is expected to propose eliminating the NEH, only allocating funding for “orderly closeout.”

**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	FY 20	FY 21 President’s Request
<b>Appropriation</b>	\$167.5	\$154.7	\$146	\$146	\$146	\$146	\$147.9	\$149.8	\$152.8	\$155	\$162.25	TBD

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