

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 \$135 million in supplemental COVID-19 economic relief grants and at least \$225 million in regular FY 2022 appropriations for the NEH.

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 US territory.

In March 2020, NEH received \$75 million in supplemental grant funding through the \$2.2 trillion Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. The agency immediately distributed \$30 million to the 56 state and jurisdictional humanities councils to support local cultural nonprofits and educational programming. In early June, NEH awarded \$40.3 million in CARES Act economic stabilization grants to more than three hundred institutions, including museums, spanning all 50 states and the District of Columbia. NEH received more than 2,300 eligible applications from cultural organizations, requesting more than \$370 million in funding. Approximately 14 percent of the applicants received grants.

Talking Points

- In FY 2020, in addition to the money distributed through NEH CARES Grants, the National Endowment for the Humanities awarded 650 grants totaling more than \$56.1 million to institutions across the US, 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.

NEH Funding History

| | Appropriation (in millions) |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| FY10 | \$167.5 |
| FY 11 | \$154.7 |
| FY 12 | \$146 |
| FY 13 CR* | \$146 |
| FY 14 | \$146 |
| FY 15 | \$145 |
| FY 16 | \$147.9 |
| FY 17 | \$149.8 |
| FY 18 | \$152.8 |
| FY 19 | \$155 |
| FY 20 | \$162.25 |
| FY 21 | \$167.5 |
| FY 22 President’s Request | TBD |

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

“National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)” - continued:

- 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 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 13 years, NEH has supported important sustainability work on [energy efficiency projects in collections care](#).

Status

- The National Endowment for the Humanities is funded through the Interior & Environment appropriations bill. The final FY 2021 spending package provided \$167.5 million, an increase of \$5.25 million over FY 2020.