

Support the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)

“The world leadership which has come to the United States cannot 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.” – National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act of 1965

Funding Overview

- NEH is currently operating at the Fiscal Year (FY) 2010 enacted level of \$167.5 million through March 18, under P.L. 112-4, the most recent Continuing Resolution (CR) passed by Congress for FY 2011.
- For FY 2012, the Obama Administration has requested \$146.3 million in funding for NEH. This represents a major cut of \$21.2 million, or 12.7%, from the NEH’s overall FY 2010 budget level. For NEH program funds (which support grants at the national *and* state levels), the President’s budget provides \$118.2 million, a decrease of \$21.8 million, or 15.6%, from the FY 2010 level of \$140 million. *We are especially concerned about the deep erosion of funds for NEH competitive grants represented by the President’s request.*

Action Needed: We recognize the serious need faced by Congress and the Administration to restrain spending. However, we ask that humanities funding—a small fraction of the federal budget, but critical to the nation’s education and research infrastructure—not be impacted disproportionately by cuts.

FY 2012—We urge Congress to continue funding for the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) at the FY 2010 enacted level of \$167.5 million in the FY 2012 Interior Appropriations Bill.

- We oppose cuts to the NEH proposed in the Administration’s request for FY 2012.*

FY 2011—As the House and Senate negotiate final spending levels for the current fiscal year, we urge Congress to continue FY 2011 funding for NEH at the \$167.5 million level.

- We oppose cuts to the NEH in H.R.1, the House-passed full-year Continuing Resolution for FY 2011.*

- NEH was cut by nearly forty percent in the mid-1990’s, and despite recent, bipartisan increases approved by Congress, the agency is still struggling to rebuild to its previous levels of demonstrated grant-making capacity.

Table: NEH Annual Appropriations, FY 94 to Present (in millions of dollars)

FISCAL YEAR	'95	'96	'00	'01	'02	'03	'04	'05	'06	'07	'08	'09	'10	'11	'12
Budget Request	177.5	182.0	150.0	150.0	120.5	126.9	152.0	162.0	138.1	141.0	141.4	144.4	171.3*	161.3	146.3
Appropriation	172.0	110.0	115.3	120.0	124.5	124.9	135.3	138.1	140.9	141.1	144.7	155.0	167.5	n/a	n/a

*The FY 2010 Budget Request included \$10 million to transfer administration of the NCACA program to NEH (not approved by Congress).

Background

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) is an independent federal agency created by Congress in 1965. Each year, NEH awards hundreds of competitive, peer-reviewed grants to a broad range of nonprofit educational organizations and institutions, and to individual scholars, throughout the country. Grantees include: universities, four- and two-year colleges, humanities centers, research institutes, museums, historical societies, libraries, archives, scholarly associations, K-12 schools, local education agencies, public television/film/radio producers, and more. *NEH extends its reach through annual operating grants to state humanities councils located in every state and U.S. territory.*

Competitive Grants

NEH competitive grants are known for their quality, and their ability to leverage significant non-federal funding for humanities projects nationwide. Competitive grants currently fall into two major categories, informally referred to as:

- ‘Core Programs’ (RESEARCH, EDUCATION, PRESERVATION, DIGITAL HUMANITIES, CHALLENGE GRANTS, PUBLIC PROGRAMS)
- ‘Special Initiatives’ (BRIDGING CULTURES, WE THE PEOPLE)

NEH grants are extremely competitive - Nationwide, annual demand for humanities support far exceeds funding available. In FY 2010, NEH received 5,205 competitive grant applications representing more than \$515 million in requested funds. Of these, NEH was only able to fund 16.6% of the competitive proposals submitted.

National Needs

As the NEH founding legislation recognizes, there is a clear federal role in supporting the humanities, just as there is for the sciences and other fields: *“An advanced civilization must not limit its efforts to science and technology alone, but must give full value and support to the other great branches of scholarly and cultural activity in order to achieve a better understanding of the past, a better analysis of the present, and a better view of the future.”*

- The humanities represent core fields of knowledge and capacities that enrich individuals, undergird our civic institutions, support strategic national interests, and aid society in addressing complex challenges.
- Our nation’s long-term economic success depends on cultivating a broadly educated workforce ready to compete in the knowledge-based, global economy of the 21st century. The U.S. has a long tradition of fostering broad access to liberal arts education. Unfortunately, this tradition is now at risk – even as it increasingly emulated by nations around the world, identifying it as a unique driver of U.S. economic leadership and innovation in the last century.

What are the humanities?

NEH is the *only* federal agency tasked with advancing US achievement in the *entire range of academic fields* in the humanities. As defined by the founding legislation, these include: *“language, both modern and classical; linguistics; literature; history; jurisprudence; philosophy; archaeology; comparative religion; ethics; the history, criticism and theory of the arts; those aspects of social sciences which have humanistic content and employ humanistic methods.”*

National Humanities Alliance Members & Supporters (2011)

African Studies Association
American Academy of Arts and Sciences
American Academy of Religion
American Anthropological Association
American Association for State and Local History
American Association of Museums
American Comparative Literature Association
American Council of Learned Societies
American Dialect Society
American Folklore Society
American Historical Association
American Institute for Conservation of Historic & Artistic Works
American Musicological Society
American Philological Association
American Philosophical Association
American Political Science Association
American Society for Aesthetics
American Society for Theatre Research
American Sociological Association
American Studies Association
Amherst College
Arizona State University
Association for Asian Studies
Association for Documentary Editing
Association for Jewish Studies
Association of American Colleges and Universities
Association of American Law Schools
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Association of American University Presses
Association of Art Museum Curators
Association of Art Museum Directors
Association of Public & Land-grant Universities
Association of Research Libraries
Boston University Humanities Foundation
Center for Research Libraries
Center for the Humanities (University of Miami)

Center for the Liberal Arts (East Carolina University)
Coalition for Networked Information
College Art Association
Columbia University
Cornell University
Community College Humanities Association
Council of American Overseas Research Centers
Council of Independent Colleges
Council on Library and Information Resources
Dartmouth College
Drew University
Duke University
Dictionary Society of North America
Doreen B. Townsend Center for the Humanities (University of California, Berkeley)
Federation of State Humanities Councils
German Studies Association
Hall Center for the Humanities (University of Kansas)
Harvard University
Heritage Preservation
History of Science Society
Imagining America (Syracuse University)
Independent Research Libraries Association
Institute for the Arts & Humanities (Penn State University)
Institute for the Humanities (University of Michigan)
Institute for the Medical Humanities (University of Texas Medical Branch)
Institute for Scholarship in the Liberal Arts (University of Notre Dame)
Latin American Studies Association
Linguistic Society of America
Medieval Academy of America
Melbern G. Glasscock Center for Humanities Research (Texas A&M University)

Middle East Studies Association
Minnesota Humanities Center
Modern Language Association of America
National Communication Association
National Council of Teachers of English
National Humanities Center
Northeastern University
Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture
Organization of American Historians
Policy Studies Association
Popular Culture Association
Princeton University
Regional Alliance for Preservation
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
Shakespeare Association of America
Simpson Center for the Humanities (University of Washington)
Sixteenth Century Society and Conference
Society for Cinema and Media Studies
Society for Ethnomusicology
Society for Music Theory
Society of Architectural Historians
Society of Biblical Literature
Society of Christian Ethics
Stanford Humanities Center
Syracuse University
The Franke Institute for the Humanities (University of Chicago)
The George Washington University
The Phi Beta Kappa Society
University of California, Santa Barbara
University of California, Santa Cruz
University of Iowa
University of Maryland
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
University of Oregon
University of Richmond
University of Southern California
Vanderbilt University
Virginia Center for the Humanities

Founded in 1981, the National Humanities Alliance is a coalition of more than 100 organizations and institutions dedicated to the advancement of research, education, preservation and public engagement in the humanities (www.nhalliance.org).