

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

2015 Annual Report

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CELEBRATING **50** YEARS

National Endowment for the Arts

arts.gov

April 15, 2016

Dear Mr. President:

It is my pleasure to submit the Annual Report of the National Endowment for the Arts for Fiscal Year 2015.

Since it was established by Congress in 1965, the NEA has awarded more than \$5 billion to strengthen the creative capacity of our communities by providing all Americans with diverse opportunities for arts participation. The NEA extends its work through partnerships with state arts agencies, local leaders, other federal agencies, and the philanthropic sector.

The activities highlighted in this report illustrate the Arts Endowment's continuing commitment to making the arts a vital part of the lifeblood of this nation. In 2015, the agency celebrated its 50th anniversary, and both highlighted its past accomplishments and looked to the future to see what more the agency could do for the country's arts and culture. I am confident that as we continue to invest in the arts, we are investing in the very things that make this country great: creativity, inspiration, and hard work.

Jane Chu
Chairman
National Endowment for the Arts

400 7th Street, SW • Washington DC 20506



THE YEAR IN REVIEW

FISCAL YEAR 2015

The National Endowment for the Arts was established by Congress in 1965 as an independent agency of the federal government. In fiscal year (FY) 2015, the NEA celebrated its 50th anniversary. As Chairman Jane Chu noted in her remarks at the National Press Club on September 25, 2015, “This country is what it is today because of its commitment to chasing wild dreams, pursuing innovative ideas, and finding the passion that ignites the spirit. The Congress of 1965 rightly recognized that to be a leader with might and strength but without heart and soul was to be an ineffectual leader indeed.”

As part of the 50th anniversary celebration, the agency launched a new initiative, Creativity Connects, to show how the arts contribute to the nation’s creative ecosystem and how the arts can connect with other sectors that want and utilize creativity. Over the next year, the initiative will include an infrastructure report to discuss the key resources that artists need in order to produce their best work; a pilot grant opportunity to support partnerships between arts organizations and non-arts sectors; and an interactive web section to show successful projects marrying arts and non-arts sectors.

The NEA also partnered with Playbill and Disney Theatrical Group to create the Musical Theater Songwriting Challenge for High School Students, and added a component to the agency’s already successful Poetry Out Loud (POL) program called Poetry Ourselves, which allowed POL state champions to offer their own poems in a separate competition. Both of those initiatives will be discussed in more detail in the FY 2016 Annual Report.

Also part of the celebration, the NEA created a new section of the website dedicated to the 50th anniversary (it is discussed below in the Online Community section).

▲ NEA Chairman Jane Chu speaking at the National Press Club about the agency’s 50th anniversary. Photo by Ralph Alswang



Grants

The NEA's FY 2015 budget was \$146,021,000, the same level as the previous fiscal year. The NEA awarded more than 2,300 grants in every Congressional district in the country, roughly half intended to reach underserved populations. Through its direct grantmaking, the NEA will support more than 30,000 concerts, readings, and performances and more than 5,000 exhibitions of visual and media arts with annual, live attendance of 33 million. NEA-supported broadcast performances on television, radio, and cable will have additional audiences of at least 360 million. NEA awards will generate more than \$600 million in matching support; in our direct grantmaking categories alone, the ratio of matching to federal funds will approach 10:1, far surpassing the required non-federal match of at least one to one.

In FY 2015, the NEA awarded 36 NEA Literature Fellowships in creative writing for poetry, totaling \$900,000, out of 1,634 eligible manuscripts. Proving that poets come from all walks of life, each with a different story and unique perspective, this year's poets include a photographer who worked in factories and the mental health field, a professional rollerblader, and a combat engineer who served six years in the Army National Guard. In addition, the NEA awarded 20 NEA Literature Fellowships in translation to support new translations of fiction, creative nonfiction, and poetry from 11 different languages into English. Projects included a translation from the Turkish of a collection of poems by Murathan Mungan, a translation from the Yiddish of *Poems from My Diary* by Abraham Sutzkever, and a translation from the German of Illija Trojanow's novel *The Lamentations of Zeno*.

Sixty-nine NEA [Our Town](#) grants to support creative placemaking around the country were made in FY 2015. Our Town supports projects that contribute toward the livability of communities and help transform sites into lively, beautiful, and sustainable places with the arts at their core. Awarded grants represent a mix of urban, tribal, suburban, and rural communities. In FY 2015, projects are being supported in communities of various sizes from all corners of our nation—from Anchorage, Alaska, to Berea, Kentucky, and from San Diego, California, to Key West, Florida.

Tied to the Our Town initiative, the NEA held a convening on November 3, 2014 called “Beyond the Building: Performing Arts and Transforming Place,” which brought together representatives of performing arts organizations from across the country to develop a better understanding of how performance-based organizations, and the artists they engage, transform places through their artistic practices. The convening included public presentations and large-group discussions as well as small-group breakout sessions. Support for the convening was provided by ArtPlace America. A report on the convening as well as video archives of the four public sessions can be found on the [arts.gov website](#).

- ◀ Among the artists appearing at American Dance Institute’s Incubator in Rockville, Maryland, is Urban Bush Women. The Incubator was supported by an FY 2015 NEA grant, as was the Urban Bush Women. Photo by Rick McCullough
- ▶ High school students paint a mural in the office of the Thunder Valley Community Development Corporation on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota. Thunder Valley received an FY 2015 Our Town grant to engage artists in the community planning process. Photo courtesy of Thunder Valley CDC





Partnerships

Forty percent of the NEA's funds are awarded to longstanding partners: the state arts agencies (SAAs) and regional arts organizations (RAOs). With these grants, the SAAs/RAOs are able to fund arts education programs, regional touring projects, and arts activities in underserved communities, among many other activities. In recent years, more than 4,500 communities have been served each year through grants made possible by these agreements.

The SAAs also facilitate the statewide contests for the NEA initiative, [Poetry Out Loud](#), celebrating its tenth year in 2015. The event culminates with semi-finals and national finals held in Washington, DC, which are webcast live. In May 2015, Alaska State POL Champion Maeva Ordaz, a high school senior from Anchorage, was named the national champion. Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation, a regional arts organization, and the Poetry Foundation are also important partners on this initiative.

Regional arts organization Arts Midwest plays an important role in two NEA initiatives: the Big Read and Shakespeare for A New Generation. For 2015-16, [the Big Read](#), the NEA initiative to restore reading to the center of American culture, awarded grants totaling more than \$1 million to 75 organizations nationwide. The initiative introduced two new books in 2015: Tayari Jones' *Silver Sparrow* and Vaddey Ratner's *In the Shadow of the Banyan*. [Shakespeare in American Communities](#), which introduces middle and high school students to live Shakespeare productions, awarded grants to 40 theater companies in 27 states and the District of Columbia to produce plays and accompanying educational material for at least ten schools each during the 2015-2016 season. Since its inception, 104 theater

Arkansas Repertory Company's production of *Macbeth*, part of the NEA's Shakespeare in American Communities initiative. Photo by Stephen B. Thornton, courtesy of Arkansas Repertory Company ▲

companies have taken part in the program, benefitting more than 2.8 million individuals, including 2.3 million students in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

In addition to partnerships on the state and regional levels, the NEA collaborates with other agencies on the federal level, and even the White House. The NEA partnered on the annual White House Holiday Tour in December 2014 to support an immersive digital wonderland developed by Second Story, which transported visitors digitally into a snowy landscape.

An important joint initiative among the NEA, the Department of Defense, and Blue Star Families, [Blue Star Museums](#) offers free museum admission to active duty military personnel and their families from Memorial Day through Labor Day. More than 2,000 museums participated in 2015, reaching an estimated 700,000 people in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and American Samoa.

Another partnership with the Department of Defense is the [NEA/Walter Reed Healing Arts Partnership](#), which began in 2011 to support creative arts therapies for service members and their families at Walter Reed's National Intrepid Center of Excellence (NICoE), dedicated to serving combat veterans with traumatic brain injury and psychological health conditions. Hundreds of active duty military and their families have taken part in the writing workshops, and visual arts and music therapy sessions in clinical and non-clinical settings. It has since been expanded to Belvoir Community Hospital's NICoE satellite at Fort Belvoir in Virginia. The creative art therapy program at Fort Belvoir includes activities such as visual arts, mask-making, and therapeutic writing, and functions as an outpatient program so that service members will not have to leave their units or families for extended periods of time.



▲ Author Thornton Wilder's nephew, Amos Tappan Wilder, speaks to students at Enterprise High School in Wallawa County, Oregon, as part of Fishtrap's NEA Big Read programming in 2015-16. Photo courtesy of Fishtrap

15th Anniversary



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

NATIONAL BOOK FESTIVAL



FESTIVAL POSTER BY PETER DE SEVE

SEPTEMBER 5, 2015 10AM - 10PM

at the WALTER E. WASHINGTON CONVENTION CENTER

Honorary Chairs:
President Obama & Mrs. Obama

National Book Festival Board Co-Chairman David M. Rubenstein
Charter Sponsors AARP, Institute of Museum and Library Services,
The Washington Post, Wells Fargo

Patrons The James Madison Council, National Endowment for the Arts
Volunteer support provided by the Junior League of Washington

American Sign Language Interpretation provided throughout this event

- ▲ Photo courtesy of Library of Congress
- ▶ NEA National Heritage Fellow Gertrude Yukie Tsutsumi performing at the 2015 awards concert at Lisner Auditorium in Washington, DC. Photo by Michael G. Stewart

As part of the Library of Congress' [National Book Festival](#) held in Washington, DC in August 2015, the NEA invited 13 writers, poets, and translators to the NEA Poetry and Prose Pavilion, of which five were NEA Literature Fellows. 2015 Poetry Out Loud state champions from Georgia and Wisconsin and 2015 Poetry Out Loud national champion from Alaska opened the event, followed by a panel on publishing in the digital age with author Lynn Freed, president of Riverhead Books Geoffrey Kloske, and editor-in-chief of *Poets & Writers* magazine Kevin Larimer. A second panel on the importance of imagination with poet and translator Jane Hirshfield, author and scholar Azar Nafisi, and journalist and poet Jeff Brown was also held. In addition, there were readings by Daniel Alarcón, Jerome Charyn, Marilyn Chin, Claudia Rankine, Ishmael Reed, Eric Pankey, and Kevin Young. The pavilion activities ended with a poetry slam which brought together slammers from Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, and Washington, DC.

The NEA continued partnering with the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities (PCAH) on projects, such as [the National Arts & Humanities Youth Program Awards](#), a collaboration among PCAH, NEA, National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), and the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), which awards outstanding after-school and out-of-school programs that are transforming the lives of young people. The NEA also worked with PCAH, NEH, and IMLS, in partnership with the Sundance Institute, on [Film Forward](#), an international cultural exchange program designed to enhance cross-cultural understanding by engaging audiences here and abroad with filmmakers and their films.

[Southern Exposure](#), a public-private program by the NEA with the Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation and the Robert Sterling Clark Foundation, awarded grants in 2015 to 34 U.S. organizations to bring five performing arts companies from Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, and Peru to tour in 18 states in 2016. The goal of the program is to build greater appreciation and understanding of Latin America by presenting exemplary performing artists to audiences across the United States who might not have access to this work.



Lifetime Honors

The Arts Endowment continued to make its events accessible to all through the use of social media and the Internet. Both lifetime honors events—NEA National Heritage Fellowships and NEA Jazz Masters—were webcast live. Archived videos of the events are available on the NEA YouTube channel.

The [NEA National Heritage Fellowships](#) concert took place in October 2015 at the George Washington University Lisner Auditorium in Washington, DC. The concert included performances by master oud player Rahim AlHaj, musician Michael Alpert with Jewish music ensemble Brave Old World, bluesman Drink Small, and Bess Lomax Hawes Award winner Daniel Sheehy's mariachi band, as well a dance piece by Japanese classical dancer Gertrude Yukie Tsutsumi and an aerial performance by circus artist Dolly Jacobs. The craft work of Cambodian ceramist Yary Livan, Slovakian traditional artist Sidonka Wadina, and Gee's Bend quilters Mary Lee Bendolph, Lucy Mingo, and Loretta Pettway was also featured.



▲ NEA Jazz Master Archie Shepp at the tribute concert at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC. Photo by Shannon Finney

The [NEA Jazz Masters](#) tribute concert occurred in April 2016 at the Kennedy Center Concert Hall in Washington, DC, bringing the event to the nation's capital to celebrate the agency's 50th anniversary. To honor the new class of Gary Burton, Wendy Oxenhorn, Pharoah Sanders, and Archie Shepp, performers included NEA Jazz Masters Randy Weston and Jimmy Heath, as well as Ambrose Akinmusire, Lakecia Benjamin, Stefon Harris, Justin Kauflin, Rudresh Mahanthappa, Jason Moran, Linda Oh, and Roswell Rudd, among others. The [archive](#) of the event can be found on arts.gov.

The [2014 National Medal of Arts](#) were awarded in September 2015 at an East Room ceremony at the White House. The awardees were John Baldessari, Ping Chong, Miriam Colón, The Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, Sally Field, Ann Hamilton, Stephen King, Meredith Monk, George Shirley, University Musical Society, and Tobias Wolff. The [archive](#) of the ceremony is available on arts.gov.



► Author Stephen King accepting the National Medal of Arts from President Obama at the White House ceremony. Photo by Ralph Alvsang

HOW CREATIVITY WORKS IN THE BRAIN



Insights from a Santa Fe Institute Working Group,
Cosponsored by the
National Endowment for the Arts



ART WORKS.

Research

The [NEA Office of Research and Analysis \(ORA\)](#) awarded 19 grants in FY 2015 for research on the value and impact of the arts in the United States, totaling \$300,000. The projects will examine topics such as an appraisal of career paths and obstacles in New Orleans' cultural economy, the relationship between live performing arts attendance and changes in stress levels and cognitive ability of older adults, and an evaluation of the effectiveness of Arts-in Corrections programming in California. At the conclusion of each project, the grantees will submit a report of their findings, methods, and data sources.

ORA continued to conduct its own research on the value and impact of the arts in all domains of American life, such as health and well-being, community livability, and economic prosperity.

In FY 2015, ORA released [*When Going Gets Tough: Barriers and Motivations Affecting Arts Attendance*](#), which examined the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of adults who attended visual and performing arts activities in 2012, using an NEA module to the 2012 General Social Survey (GSS). The report specifically looked at the attitudes, motivations, and barriers for attending the arts at different life stages—the first time the NEA has published a report on this type of data. Among the findings was that there were common barriers for the 13 percent—31 million adults—who were interested in a specific event, but did not go for some reason:

- Nearly 60 percent of people with children under age six said lack of time was the greatest single barrier to attendance. This finding could inspire arts providers to develop more family-friendly program options.
- Some noted that the location was too difficult to get to. This was especially a problem for retirees, older adults, and adults with physical disabilities. If we're quantifying the value of what we often term "access to the arts," it's about 11 million lost audience members or exhibit-goers.
- Twenty-two percent of those who wanted to attend but chose not to said a barrier was not having someone to go with.

Motivations include:

- Top reasons Americans attend the arts (performances and exhibits) include socializing with friends or family members (73 percent); learning new things (64 percent); and supporting the community (51 percent).
- Despite similar household incomes and education, people who call themselves middle-class were more likely to attend the arts than those who identified themselves as working class. Thwarted interest, rather than lack of interest, may be the cause for lower attendance rates among some audiences.

The ORA also released [*How Creativity Works in the Brain*](#), a report based on a two-day workshop with the Sante Fe Institute on "The Nature of Creativity in the Brain." It summarizes themes and trends emerging from psychological and neurobiological studies of creativity, and explores models for trans-disciplinary collaborations and the need for more rigorous study on artistic creation.

Among the conclusions from the meeting:

- Creativity research requires more partnerships among neurobiologists, artists, psychologists, and educators.
- More than 30 years of cognitive-behavioral research has informed our knowledge about creativity, but there is little neuroscience to back it up. The field needs neuroscientific validation of existing tools to assess creativity in individuals. If effective, these tests can be adopted more widely by our nation's educators, employers, and other decision-makers.
- Brain research is a young field, which makes it the perfect time to invest in creativity research, even while neuroscience models and technologies continue to develop.

ORA continued to convene the task force of 13 federal agencies and departments, the [*Federal Interagency Task Force on the Arts and Human Development*](#), which works to encourage more and better research on how the arts help people reach their full potential at all stages of life. Webinars of task force meetings in FY 2015 revolved around arts education and bilingual student success; visual arts, learning, and coping; Alzheimer's and the arts; and music therapy, music listening, and the cancer experience.



Online Community

As part of the agency’s 50th anniversary, the NEA launched a new [web section](#) celebrating its renowned history. Among the many features found in the section, we created an interactive timeline that highlights important grants and projects that the agency has supported over the last 50 years, a series of videos that elaborate on specific organizations and artists that have impacted U.S. culture, a collection of infographics and motion graphics that highlight important aspects of the NEA’s impact on the arts in the country, and a collection of stories crowdsourced from the public, state arts agencies, and Congress on the importance of the arts in their lives and communities.

In order to interact with the field in a more in-depth way, the NEA has been holding webinars on various topics throughout the year. In addition, discipline offices send out monthly or quarterly newsletters with information about their field, and the Office of Public Affairs sends out a monthly newsletter to the arts community on what is happening at the agency and in the arts in general.

The NEA has continued webcasting its National Council on the Arts meetings as well as NEA events such as the Poetry Out Loud National Finals, the NEA Jazz Masters Awards Ceremony and Concert, and the NEA National Heritage Fellowships Concert.

The NEA continues to interact with the general public through our social media channels. Content on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [YouTube](#) reaches an increasingly larger audience with each year, and new channels on [Pinterest](#) and [Instagram](#) are steadily gathering viewers.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

SUMMARY OF FUNDS AVAILABLE

FY 2015

Appropriated Program Funds	116,633,000
Appropriated Balance, Prior Year ¹	8,034,039
Nonfederal Gifts ¹	1,135,908
Interagency Transfers ¹	1,309,000
TOTAL PROGRAM FUNDS AVAILABLE	127,111,947
TOTAL PROGRAM SUPPORT FUNDS AVAILABLE ¹	3,858,631
TOTAL SALARIES & EXPENSES FUNDS AVAILABLE ²	34,341,377
TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE ³	165,311,955

¹ Includes FY 2014 unobligated funds brought forward into FY 2015, prior year deobligations carried forward into FY 2015, and funds newly available in FY 2015, as applicable.

² Includes appropriated funds, nonfederal gifts, and interagency transfers including FY 2014 unobligated funds brought forward into FY 2015, prior year deobligations brought forward into FY 2015, and funds newly available in FY 2015, as applicable.

³ Includes nonfederal gifts and interagency transfers held on behalf of the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities.

SUMMARY OF FUNDS OBLIGATED FOR FY 2015 ¹

TOTAL

(\$ in thousands)

CREATION OF ART

Direct Endowment Grants	
Project Support	11,620
Challenge America	435
Total Creation of Art	12,055

ENGAGING WITH ART

Direct Endowment Grants	
Project Support	48,410
Challenge America	7,306
Total Engaging with Art	55,716

PROMOTING KNOWLEDGE

Direct Endowment Grants	
Project Support	3,772
Challenge America	30
Total Promoting Knowledge	3,802

PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE ARTS

State & Regional Partnerships	
Basic Plan Support	36,945
Underserved	9,904
Total Partnerships for the Arts	46,849

Total Program Funds Obligated	118,422
Total Program Support Funds Obligated	3,369
Total Program & Program Support Funds Obligated	121,791
Total Salaries & Expenses Funds Obligated	28,234
TOTAL FUNDS OBLIGATED ²	150,025

¹ Includes appropriated funds, nonfederal gifts, and interagency transfers

² Includes funds obligated on behalf of the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON THE ARTS

(as of April 15, 2015)

Jane Chu

Chairman, National Endowment
for the Arts

Bruce Carter, Ph.D.

Arts Researcher
Miami Beach, FL
Term: 2013-2018

Aaron Dworkin

Violinist/Music Educator
Ann Arbor, MI
Term: 2011-2014

Lee Greenwood

Performer/Songwriter
Nashville, TN
Term: 2008-2014

Deepa Gupta

Philanthropic Professional
Chicago, IL
Term: 2012-2016

Paul Hodes

Attorney/Musician/Former
Congressman
Concord, NH
Term: 2012-2016

Maria Rosario Jackson, Ph.D.

Urban Planning & Community
Policy Specialist
Los Angeles, CA
Term: 2013-2016

Emil J. Kang

Music Professor/Arts
Administrator
Chapel Hill, NC
Term: 2012-2018

Charlotte Kessler

Patron/Trustee
Columbus, OH
Term: 2006-2012*

María López De León

Arts Administrator
San Antonio, TX
Term: 2013-2016

Rick Lowe

Artist, Community Organizer
Houston, TX
Term: 2013-2018

David "Mas" Masumoto

Organic Farmer/Author
Del Rey, CA
Term: 2013-2018

Irvin Mayfield

Jazz Musician//Bandleader
New Orleans, LA
Term: 2010-2014

Barbara Ernst Prey

Visual Artist
Oyster Bay, NY
Term: 2008-2014

Ranee Ramaswamy

Dancer, Choreographer, Teacher
Minneapolis, MN
Term: 2013-2018

Diane Rodriguez

Producer, Actor, Writer
Los Angeles, CA
Term: 2016-2022

Tom Rothman

Film Industry Executive
Los Angeles, CA
Term: 2016

Olga Viso

Museum Director
Minneapolis, MN
Term: 2013-2018

* Council members continue
to serve even after their terms
expire until their replacements
are confirmed by the Senate.

Ex-Officio Members, United States Congress

Senate

Tammy Baldwin
(D-WI)

House

Betty McCollum
(D-MN)

Patrick J. Tiberi
(R-OH)

Appointment by Majority and
Minority leadership of the
remaining Members of Congress
to the Council is pending.

NEA DISCIPLINE DIRECTORS

(as of April 15, 2015)

Music & Opera

Ann Meier Baker

Accessibility

Beth Bienvenu

Museums, Visual Arts, and Indemnity

Wendy Clark

Media Arts

Jax Deluca

Arts Education

Ayanna N. Hudson

Research & Analysis

Sunil Iyengar

Local Arts Agencies & Challenge America

Michael Killoren

Folk & Traditional Arts

Clifford Murphy

Artist Communities, Presenting & Multidisciplinary Works,
International Activities Coordinator

Michael Orlove

Theater & Musical Theater

Greg Reiner

State & Regional

Laura Scanlan

Design

Jason Schupbach

Dance

Douglas Sonntag

Literature

Amy Stolls



CELEBRATING **50** YEARS

National Endowment for the Arts

arts.gov