

# NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

## and the **National Interest**

AS PRESIDENT-ELECT TRUMP takes office, we urge the presidential transition team to consider the crucial role the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) plays in serving America's national interest. With a small infusion of federal funds, NEH grant programs have an outsized economic and cultural impact on communities across the nation.

### NEH SAFEGUARDS OUR HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL LEGACY

NEH ensures our history and culture are preserved and made widely accessible to all American citizens. The following grants—all awarded in the past year—are emblematic of this work:

- An award to the **South Dakota Historical Society** to digitize South Dakota's historical newspapers. This grant is part of NEH's *Chronicling America* program, which is creating an online database of newspapers published between 1690 and 1963, from all the states and U.S. territories. This growing resource serves students, teachers, and researchers.
- An award to the **Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Foundation** to identify and publish all documents written by or to Abraham Lincoln during his lifetime. This is one of many NEH grants that have been instrumental in preserving the legacy of the nation's founding generations.
- An award to the **Montana Historical Society and Museum** to preserve art, artifacts, archival materials, photographs, and publications for current and future generations. This small grant was one of many distributed by NEH that preserve cultural heritage from small towns around the country.



### NEH ON THE ROAD

Through the *NEH on the Road* program, the National Endowment for the Humanities ensures that museum exhibitions that explore American history can travel to mid-sized museums, libraries and schools throughout the country.

A public library in North Little Rock, Arkansas hosted the NEH on the Road exhibition, *Our Lives, Our Stories: America's Greatest Generation*, and was overwhelmed by the positive response to the exhibition from senior citizens, who shared memories of loved ones who served their country during World War II.

“It was an education in preserving the past for future generations. We deeply appreciate how a program like this supports the needs of smaller museums and local libraries such as ours.”—*Director, Laman Library*

## NEH GRANTS HAVE AN OUTSIZED ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITIES THEY SERVE

The institutions funded by NEH—such as museums and historic sites—attract significant tourist revenue, creating jobs in communities throughout the country. According to the 2009 Cultural & Heritage Traveler Study, cultural and heritage tourism accounted for 78% of all U.S. leisure travelers, or 118.3 million adults per year, and contributed over \$192 billion to the national economy per year. 66% of all cultural heritage tourists visit historic sites, 32% shop in museum stores, 54% visit art museums or galleries, and 45% attend arts or crafts fairs and festivals.

- Over several decades, NEH has supported the development of new exhibitions at Thomas Jefferson’s Monticello. These grants have had an outsized impact on the local economy as Monticello welcomes nearly 400,000 annual visitors, 93% of them were from outside Virginia and 50% stayed in a hotel for at least one night adding at least \$13.1 million dollars to the local economy.
- A grant to the Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum funded *Forgotten Gateway: Coming to America Through Galveston Island*. This exhibition attracted 1.5 million visitors in four cities. In Austin, where the exhibit opened, 46% of the museum’s visitors were from out of town. When the exhibit traveled to the Ellis Island Immigration Museum, approximately 95% of the people who toured the exhibit were from out of town (40% from countries outside the U.S.).

### THE FEDERAL ROLE IN HUMANITIES FUNDING

NEH is the only entity, federal or private, that has a national mandate to support humanities research, teaching, programming, and preservation. *NEH grants catalyze private investment*. Small organizations leverage NEH grants to attract additional private, local support. NEH’s Challenge Grant program has leveraged federal funds at a 3:1 ratio to enable organizations to raise more than \$3 billion in private support. State Humanities Councils, meanwhile, leverage \$5 for every dollar of federal investment. Grants through the Public Programs division have leveraged more than \$16 billion in non-federal support, an 8:1 ratio.

Many states where cultural tourism is an important part of the economy—such as Alabama, Iowa, Kansas, New Hampshire, and West Virginia—depend on NEH funding to attract private investment. These states would be disproportionately affected by a decline in public investment.

### FUNDING REQUEST

Congress has shown bipartisan support for NEH in recent years, taking modest steps to increase its funding. In FY16, Congress approved a \$1.9 million increase for the agency, and in draft legislation for FY17 the House approved an additional \$1.9 million increase while the Senate provided an additional \$500,000. To boost its important work, **we ask that President Trump request that Congress appropriate \$155 million for NEH in FY 2018.**



### NEH AIDS VETERANS IN THE TRANSITION BACK TO CIVILIAN LIFE

NEH’s *Standing Together* initiative funds reading groups for veterans that help them process their experiences through discussions on the literature of war; writing programs for veterans suffering from PTSD; and training for Veterans Affairs staff to help them better serve veterans. Last year’s increased appropriation was critical to expanding this program, although much unmet demand continues to exist.

Standing Together includes the *Warrior-Scholar Project*, which assists veterans in transitioning from the military to college. This “humanities boot camp” engages participants with themes of war, service, and the values held in common in our democracy, while it equips them with skills to succeed in college.

