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National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities: FY2026 Appropriations

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National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities: FY2026 Appropriations

The National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities is the primary vehicle for federal support for the arts and the humanities. Established in 1965, the foundation currently consists of three agencies: the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). IMLS is funded through the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act. NEA and NEH are funded through the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act.

P.L. 119-4, the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025, provided FY2025 funding for IMLS, NEA, and NEH at the FY2024 levels. For IMLS, this was \$294.8 million, for NEA it was \$207.0 million, and for NEH it was also \$207.0 million.

P.L. 119-74, the Commerce, Justice, Science, Energy and Water Development, and Interior and Environment Appropriations Act, 2026, provided FY2026 appropriations for the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations act, including NEA and NEH. P.L. 119-75, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2026, provided FY2026 appropriations for the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, including IMLS.

For FY2026, IMLS received an appropriation of \$291.8 million. This level was \$3.0 million less than in FY2024 and FY2025. NEA and NEH each received \$207.0 million, the same amount as in FY2024 and FY2025.

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Introduction

The National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities is the primary vehicle for federal support for the arts and humanities. The foundation, established in 1965, was composed initially of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) was established within the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities in 1996. NEA and NEH typically receive annual appropriations through the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act. IMLS typically receives annual appropriations through the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act.¹

This report primarily compares FY2026 appropriations with FY2025 appropriations. FY2026 appropriations were provided in P.L. 119-74, the Commerce, Justice, Science; Energy and Water Development; and Interior and Environment Appropriations Act, 2026, and P.L. 119-75, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2026. FY2025 appropriations were provided in P.L. 119-4, Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025. This report also provides a table showing appropriations for the three agencies, by activity, for FY2023-FY2026.

Institute of Museum and Library Services

IMLS is the primary administrator of grants supporting the nation's libraries and museums. It consolidates federal library programs dating back to 1956, with museum programs dating back to 1976. IMLS grants reach all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories. In FY2026, IMLS appropriations totaled \$291.8 million, \$3.0 million less than the FY2025 appropriations.²

The IMLS Grants to States program is both the largest source of federal funding for library services in the United States and the largest IMLS-administered program. These grants are allocated, by a population-based formula, to state library administrative agencies located in each of the states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories. These agencies may use funds for IMLS Grants to States to support library initiatives across their states or territories, or they may distribute the funds to public, academic, research, school, or special libraries or consortia of libraries through competitive subawards or cooperative agreements.³ For this program, IMLS received appropriations of \$181.4 million in FY2026, \$1.4 million more than the \$180.0 million in FY2025.

IMLS also has several competitive library grant programs, including:

- the Native Hawaiian/Native American Library Services program, which assists Native American and Native Hawaiian libraries in improving core services for their communities;
- the National Leadership Grants for Libraries program, which supports projects that develop, enhance, or adapt replicable practices, programs, models, or tools to strengthen library and archival services for the American public; and
- the Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian program, which supports projects that provide training and professional development to library and archives

¹ P.L. 89-209, National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act of 1965.

² P.L. 119-75, Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2026, Division C; Explanatory Statement Regarding Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2026, *Congressional Record*, vol. 172, no. 15, Book II (January 22, 2026), p. H1599.

³ For more information on IMLS's Grants to States program, see CRS Report R46611, *Institute of Museum and Library Services Grants to States Funding Formula: In Brief*.

professionals; develop faculty and information leaders; and recruit, educate, and retain the next generation of library and archives professionals.

For these programs IMLS received appropriations of \$31.1 million in FY2026, the same amount as in FY2025.

IMLS's competitive grant programs for museums include the following:

- The Museums for America program invests in museums of all sizes and disciplines in project-based efforts to serve the public through educational programs and exhibits, community partnerships, and collections stewardship activities.
- The Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services program supports Native American Tribes, Alaska Native Villages, and organizations that primarily serve and represent Native Hawaiians in sustaining heritage, culture, and knowledge. The program funds projects such as educational services and programs, professional development, organizational capacity building, community engagement, and collections stewardship.
- The National Leadership Grants for Museums program invests in projects that address critical needs of the museum field by advancing museum-based learning practices, responsiveness to community needs, and high-priority collections care or conservation issues.
- The 21st Century Museum Professionals Program supports projects that build career pathways, strengthen professional networks, and identify and share effective workforce education and training practices in the museum field.
- Museum Grants for African American History and Culture is designed to build museum capacity, support the growth and development of museum professionals, and improve access to museum and archival collections at African American museums and historically Black colleges and universities.
- Museum Grants for American Latino History and Culture is designed to build the capacity of American Latino history and culture museums to serve their communities and advance the growth and development of a professional workforce in American Latino institutions.

For these programs, IMLS received appropriations of \$54.9 million in FY2026, \$0.6 million less than the \$55.5 million in FY2025.

IMLS program administration received \$19.0 million in FY2026, \$3.7 million less than the \$22.7 million appropriated in FY2025. Included in the FY2026 amount was \$2.0 million for the Information Literacy Taskforce. The FY2025 included \$4.0 million for the continuation and expansion of the Information Literacy Taskforce.

National Endowment for the Arts

NEA is a major source of support for all arts disciplines. Typically, NEA grants are used to support nonprofit arts organizations, public arts agencies and organizations, and individual writers and translators.⁴ Since 1965, NEA has awarded more than \$5.5 billion in funding across all 50

⁴ NEA, by law (P.L. 111-88, Title IV, Section 438), is not permitted to give grants to individuals, with the exception of literature fellowships (creative writing and translation), National Heritage Fellowships, or NEA Jazz Masters Fellowships.

states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories. In FY2026, appropriations totaled \$207.0 million, level with the FY2025 appropriations.⁵

NEA's largest grant program is its state partnerships grants, which are awarded by formula to state and regional arts agencies. These agencies apply annually for this support, and the funding they receive includes general funding for their priorities and designated funding for folk and traditional arts, arts education, and outreach to underserved communities. FY2026 appropriations included \$65.2 million for these grants, equal to the FY2025 appropriation.

NEA's direct grants include the following:

- The Grants for Arts Projects is the principal competitive grant program for nonprofit organizations and awards grants in a number of artistic disciplines.
- Our Town is a program within Grants for Arts Projects that supports projects that integrate arts, culture, and design in efforts to advance local economic, physical, and other community-based outcomes.
- Challenge America is a program within Grants for Arts Projects that supports projects specifically focused on activities for underserved groups or communities.

NEA also supports several national initiatives. They include Creative Forces: NEA Military Healing Arts Network, Poetry Out Loud, the NEA Big Read, and Celebrating America's 250th Anniversary. FY2026 appropriations included \$97.8 million for these grant programs and initiatives, equal to the FY2025 appropriation.

National Endowment for the Humanities

NEH supports grants for humanities education, research, preservation, and public programs; the creation of regional humanities centers; and the development of humanities programs under the jurisdiction of the state humanities councils. Typically, NEH grants support cultural institutions, such as museums, archives, libraries, colleges, universities, public television and radio, and individual scholars. Since 1965, NEH has awarded more than 70,000 projects across all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories. For FY2026, NEH appropriations totaled \$207.0 million, level with the FY2025 appropriation.⁶

The Federal/State Partnership program is the largest program in NEH's budget. Program grants are awarded, by formula, to state humanities agencies to increase public awareness of, access to, and support for the humanities in the United States. The FY2026 appropriations act included \$65.0 million for this program, the same amount as provided in the FY2025 appropriations act.

The FY2026 appropriations act included \$78.0 million for NEH's direct competitive grants, equal to the FY2025 appropriations. These grants are in:

- preservation and access,

⁵ P.L. 119-74, Commerce, Justice, Science; Energy and Water Development; and Interior and Environment Appropriations Act, 2026, Division C; Explanatory Statement Regarding Commerce, Justice, Science; Energy and Water Development; and Interior and Environment Appropriations Act, 2026, *Congressional Record*, vol. 172, no. 5 (January 8, 2026), pp. H484, H586.

⁶ P.L. 119-74, Commerce, Justice, Science; Energy and Water Development; and Interior and Environment Appropriations Act, 2026, Division C; Explanatory Statement Regarding Commerce, Justice, Science, Energy and Water Development; and Interior and Environment Appropriations Act, 2026, *Congressional Record*, vol. 172, no. 5 (January 8, 2026), pp. H484, H587.

- public programs,
- research programs,
- education programs,
- program development, and
- digital humanities initiatives.

In addition, the FY2026 and FY2025 appropriations acts both included \$7.0 million for special initiatives.

In FY2026, the two special initiatives were:

1. Celebrate America!—Chairman’s Grants in Honor of America’s 250th Anniversary, with grants for projects that focus on the founding of the American nation, key historical figures, and milestones that reflect the exceptional achievements of the United States; and
2. the National Garden of American Heroes: Statues, which supports the design and creation of statues of historical figures from America’s past who have contributed to the country’s cultural, scientific, economic, and political heritage.

In FY2025, the two special initiatives were:

1. A More Perfect Union, an NEH-wide initiative launched in 2019 to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States; and
2. American Tapestry: Weaving Together Past, Present, and Future, a wide-ranging program announced in 2022 to leverage the humanities to strengthen democracy, advance equity for all, and address the changing climate.

Further, NEH supports a matching grant program to stimulate and match private donations in support of humanities institutions. NEH estimates that since their start in 1977, matching grants have generated more than \$1.3 billion in nonfederal funds for the humanities. The FY2026 appropriations act included \$15.0 million, equal to the FY2025 appropriations for this program.

Recent Appropriations

Table 1 details appropriations for the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities agencies. It provides enacted annual appropriations for FY2023-FY2026.

**Table 1. Institute of Museum and Library Services, National Endowment for the Arts, and National Endowment for the Humanities:
FY2023-FY2026 Annual Appropriations**

In Thousands of Dollars

| Agency and Program | FY2023 Enacted | FY2024 Enacted | FY2025 Enacted | FY2026 Enacted |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Institute of Museum and Library Services (Total) | 294,800 | 294,800 | 294,800 | 291,800 |
| Library Grants to States | 180,000 | 180,000 | 180,000 | 181,400 |
| Native American and Native Hawaiian Library Services | 5,763 | 5,763 | 5,763 | 5,763 |
| National Leadership: Libraries | 15,287 | 15,287 | 15,287 | 15,287 |

| Agency and Program | FY2023 Enacted | FY2024 Enacted | FY2025 Enacted | FY2026 Enacted |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Laura Bush 21 st Century Librarian | 10,000 | 10,000 | 10,000 | 10,000 |
| Museums for America | 30,330 | 30,330 | 30,330 | 28,730 |
| Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services | 3,772 | 3,772 | 3,772 | 3,772 |
| National Leadership: Museums | 9,348 | 9,348 | 9,348 | 9,348 |
| 21 st Century Museum Professionals | - | - | - | 1,000 |
| Museum Grants for African American History and Culture | 6,000 | 6,000 | 6,000 | 6,000 |
| Museum Grants for American Latino History and Culture | 6,000 | 6,000 | 6,000 | 6,000 |
| Research, Analysis, and Data Collection | 5,650 | 5,650 | 5,650 | 5,500 |
| Program Administration | 22,650 | 22,650 | 22,650 | 19,000 |
| National Endowment for the Arts (Total) | 207,000 | 207,000 | 207,000 | 207,000 |
| State Partnerships | 64,980 | 65,180 | 65,180 | 65,180 |
| Direct Grants ^a | 97,470 | 97,770 | 97,770 | 97,770 |
| Program Support | 2,500 | 2,500 | 2,500 | 2,500 |
| Administration | 42,050 | 41,550 | 41,550 | 41,550 |
| National Endowment for the Humanities (Total) | 207,000 | 207,000 | 207,000 | 207,000 |
| Federal/State Partnership | 65,000 | 65,000 | 65,000 | 65,000 |
| Preservation and Access | 22,500 | 21,400 | 21,400 | 21,400 |
| Public Programs | 15,800 | 15,000 | 15,000 | 15,000 |
| Research Programs | 17,500 | 17,500 | 17,500 | 17,500 |
| Education Programs | 15,400 | 15,400 | 15,400 | 15,400 |
| Program Development | 2,800 | 2,500 | 2,500 | 2,500 |
| Digital Humanities Initiatives | 6,250 | 6,200 | 6,200 | 6,200 |
| Special Initiatives ^b | 7,000 | 7,000 | 7,000 | 7,000 |
| Matching Grants | 18,750 | 15,000 | 15,000 | 15,000 |
| Administration | 36,000 | 42,000 | 42,000 | 42,000 |

Source: Prepared by CRS based on data from the House and Senate Appropriations Committees, appropriations acts, and congressional justifications.

Notes:

- a. Includes Challenge America grants, Grants for Art Projects, Our Town grants, and national initiatives.
- b. Includes A More Perfect Union and American Tapestry: Weaving Together Past, Present, and Future and, in FY2026, Chairman's Grants in Honor of America's 250th Anniversary and National Garden of American Heroes: Statues.

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