

A person is shown from the side, looking down at a book or document. The image is overlaid with a blue tint. The person's hand is visible, holding the book. The background is dark, and the overall mood is one of quiet study and intellectual pursuit.

NEH Strategic Plan Fiscal Year 2018 - Fiscal Year 2022

NEH MISSION STATEMENT

The National Endowment for the Humanities serves and strengthens our nation by supporting high-quality projects and programs in the humanities and by making the humanities available to all Americans.

The public has a great appetite for learning, and the programing offered by NEH continues to nourish the intellectual and artistic curiosity of those who continue to explore the unknown in the pursuit of knowledge for the betterment of mankind.

In addition to awarding grants through its programmatic divisions, NEH supports various projects that offer learning and research opportunities to the public. One such initiative is *Chronicling America*, a joint project of NEH and the Library of Congress to provide searchable digital access to more than twelve million pages of historic newspapers from across the country. This enables users to see themselves and their communities in the context of their times while creating new ways for scholars to tell the stories of America.

The NEH programmatic divisions—Education Programs, Preservation and Access, Public Programs, Research Programs, Digital Humanities, and Federal/State Partnership—participated in funding 813 humanities projects in FY 2017, totaling \$120,350,041.





—Minhazul Islam

THE DIVISION OF EDUCATION PROGRAMS continues to strengthen the teaching of the humanities from K–12 to the university level.



—Charles "Ironic" Harris / Courtesy Carnegie Museum of Art

THE DIVISION OF PRESERVATION AND ACCESS funds projects to ensure the longevity and accessibility of the nation's cultural heritage, including books, manuscripts, sound recordings, still and moving images, and works of art and digital collections at museums, libraries, and archives.



—Courtesy Ellen Barri

THE DIVISION OF PUBLIC PROGRAMS supports projects that bring a variety of humanities topics to large audiences through museum and library exhibitions, television and radio documentaries, reading and discussion series, digital media projects, and history and literature programs at libraries and other cultural organizations.



—The White House Historical Society via WikiCommons

THE DIVISION OF RESEARCH PROGRAMS actively supports scholarly research that advances knowledge and understanding of the humanities. Grants are made to individuals and groups of scholars for scholarly research, translation, scholarly editions, and archaeological work.



—Photo by Erik Jepsen / Callit2 UC San Diego

THE OFFICE OF DIGITAL HUMANITIES supports efforts to use computing tools for research and teaching in the humanities. Funded projects have changed how material and information is searched, mined, displayed, taught, and analyzed. And many successful funded projects have already placed searchable archival material online for ready access and research.



—By George Houghton / Courtesy Vermont Historical Society

THE OFFICE OF FEDERAL/STATE PARTNERSHIP plays a significant role in funding operating costs and special projects at 55 state and territorial humanities councils. NEH funding enables these organizations to promote and encourage participation in humanities-based initiatives and the grant application process at the state level.



—Creative Commons

GOAL 1 PROVIDE OPPORTUNITY AND ACCESS FOR ALL AMERICANS WHO WISH TO PURSUE KNOWLEDGE IN THE HUMANITIES.

OBJECTIVE 1—EXPAND ACCESS TO THE HUMANITIES IN TRADITIONALLY UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES.

INCREASE OUTREACH TO Native Americans, veterans, minority-serving institutions, and states that have historically been underrepresented in NEH’s grantmaking activities.

IN LATE 2017, SENIOR DEPUTY CHAIRMAN Jon Parrish Peede implemented a new travel fund for outreach to underserved areas. It has been used for:

- A grant-writing workshop for local cultural institutions in South Dakota
- A trip to the Mountain Plains Museum Association Conference
- Regional outreach and a grant-writing workshop with the Appalachian College Association
- Creation of a “Digital Humanities Day” at Iowa State University.

STRATEGIES:

PROVIDE SUPPORT to small humanities institutions, including local museums, historical societies, and libraries.

ENCOURAGE GRANTS from historically underrepresented areas by working closely with state humanities councils and encouraging agency travel to those areas.

INCREASE EFFORTS to recruit new peer-review panelists, particularly those belonging to underrepresented groups.

CONTINUE TO WORK with all members of Congress to strengthen connections to their local humanities organizations and spread awareness of NEH grant opportunities.

OBJECTIVE 2—PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS TO ADVANCE THEIR ABILITY TO TEACH THE HUMANITIES.

STRENGTHEN the teaching and learning of Western classics and American history.

PROVIDE PROFESSIONAL development opportunities for teachers at all levels of the nation's educational system to renew and deepen their knowledge of the humanities.

STRENGTHEN EFFORTS to enhance the availability and quality of humanities teaching and learning in the nation's community colleges, especially the study of diverse cultures and historical perspectives.

SUPPORT EFFORTS of faculty at Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic-Serving Institutions, and Tribal Colleges and Universities to deepen their knowledge in the humanities and strengthen their humanities offerings.

STRATEGIES:

OBJECTIVE 3—FACILITATE HUMANITIES SCHOLARSHIP AT THE POST-SECONDARY LEVEL.

ENCOURAGE COLLABORATION between humanities scholars and academics of other disciplines.

SUPPORT FELLOWSHIPS AND STIPENDS that enable scholars—both those affiliated with educational institutions and those working independently—to devote a concentrated period of time to research and writing on significant subjects in all fields of the humanities.

PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES for collaborative research on significant subjects in the humanities.

STRATEGIES:



—Deborah Hertz / NEH



—Our Trojan War / Courtesy Aquila Theatre

OBJECTIVE 4—BRING ABOUT HUMANITIES PROGRAMMING FOR ACTIVE-DUTY MILITARY MEMBERS AND VETERANS.

Support high-quality projects, designed to help troops explore and contextualize their experiences, such as:

LITERATURE AND MEDICINE: HUMANITIES AT THE HEART OF HEALTHCARE, which offers support to doctors, nurses, administrators and staff at VA hospitals through reading and discussion groups

VETERAN WRITING WORKSHOPS, which provide outlets for active military members, returning combat veterans, and their families to express themselves through creative writing

AQUILA THEATRE, which gives veterans and military family members the opportunity to share their stories and explore catharsis through performances and discussions of ancient Greek drama as a medium for veterans to process their experiences

OPERATION OPPORTUNITY (The Warrior-Scholar Project), which funds an intensive two-week workshop hosted at American's top universities to ease veterans' transitions from active duty to higher education

THE NATIONAL NAVY UDT-SEAL MUSEUM, which houses artifacts that tell the stories of Navy SEALs and the special operations they enacted through history

100 FACES OF WAR EXPERIENCE, which focuses on interpreting military experience in Iraq and Afghanistan through portraiture and short personal narratives.

STRATEGIES:

FOR MANY VETERANS, a connection with the humanities is life-changing. NEH will continue to find ways to help veterans and promote understanding of the military experience through academic boot camps for soldiers returning to school, theater performances based on veterans' personal experiences, and literature programs for medical caregivers.

GOAL 2 SIMPLIFY THE NEH GRANTEE EXPERIENCE

OBJECTIVE 1—STREAMLINE THE NEH GRANT APPLICATION PROCESS.

STRATEGIES:

REDESIGN NEH.GOV to deliver a more user-friendly experience and increase accessibility.

INTRODUCE GREATER standardization to the grant application process across divisions.

SIMPLIFY OR SHORTEN current grant guidelines wherever possible.

RETHINK “EDSITEMENT” website to encourage greater use by students, teachers, and parents.

HARMONIZE MESSAGING across all NEH social media accounts to facilitate clearer and more effective communication with potential grantees.

OBJECTIVE 2—IMPROVE POST-AWARD SUPPORT TO GRANTEES.

STRATEGIES:

ENCOURAGE GREATER interaction between state humanities councils and NEH grantees.

HELP GRANTEES promote their grant projects with support from NEH offices of Communications and Congressional Affairs.

OBJECTIVE 3—RECRUIT AND RETAIN A HIGHLY QUALIFIED, DIVERSE, CUSTOMER-FOCUSED, AND RESULTS-ORIENTED WORKFORCE.

STRATEGIES:

ENSURE THAT NEH STAFF HAS the education, skills, and training needed to advance the mission of the agency.

MAINTAIN A DIVERSE and results-oriented workforce that is deployed appropriately in support of the agency’s core functions.

SEEK OPPORTUNITIES to streamline the hiring process, with an emphasis on reducing the barriers to federal employment.

NEH RECENTLY CREATED a new grant program to increase capacity and build infrastructure at museums and other cultural institutions—through the NEH Infrastructure and Capacity-Building Challenge Grants. These grants provide matching funds for capital expenditures such as construction projects, the purchase of equipment, sharing of humanities collections, documentation of lost or imperiled cultural heritage, sustaining digital scholarly infrastructure, and the preservation and conservation of humanities collections. These grants help meet the needs of smaller institutions by providing types of funding that are often the most difficult to obtain, with a view to improving and growing America’s cultural infrastructure.

GOAL 3 ALIGN AGENCY ACTIVITIES WITH NEH FOUNDING LEGISLATION AND CURRENT ADMINISTRATION PRIORITIES

OBJECTIVE 1—RETURN FOCUS OF AGENCY ACTIVITY TO AMERICA’S CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL INFRASTRUCTURE.

STRATEGIES:

SUPPORT AND PROMOTE the newly created “Infrastructure and Capacity-Building Challenge Grants” program.

PRESERVE AND PROTECT America’s cultural patrimony.

OBJECTIVE 2—ENSURE TAXPAYER DOLLARS ARE SPENT IN THE MOST IMPACTFUL MANNER POSSIBLE.

STRATEGIES:

MAKE USE of data-gathering tools to measure total impact of NEH grants on the national, state, and local levels.

TRACK ECONOMIC impact of NEH-funded projects.

IN SEPTEMBER 2017, NEH COMMITTED \$1 MILLION IN EMERGENCY FUNDING to cultural institutions affected by hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria. NEH fast-tracked emergency grants of up to \$30,000 to museums in FEMA-designated disaster zones of Texas, Florida, Louisiana, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands:

TO THE BLUE TRIANGLE MULTICULTURAL ASSOCIATION in Houston to mitigate damage to a historic mural by artist John T. Biggers, *Contribution of Negro Women to African Life and Education*

TO THE FRIENDS OF THE TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION to mitigate damage to the iconic 1870s Fulton Mansion, in Rockport-Fulton, and to restore its collections

TO THE TEXAS CULTURAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE ALLIANCE to conduct a series of mitigation and recovery workshops for small museums, galleries, historical societies, and the general public affected by Hurricane Harvey

TO THE MUSEO DE ARTE DE PONCE in Puerto Rico to address expenses involved in maintaining operations and protect its collections from humidity and damage

TO THE ASSOCIATION TO PRESERVE AFRICAN AMERICAN Society, History, and Tradition, in Florida, to restore the storm-damaged Wells’Built museum.

GOAL 4 COORDINATE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT-WIDE CULTURAL INITIATIVES

OBJECTIVE 1—CONTINUE TO LEAD FEDERAL GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO AID CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS IN TIMES OF NATURAL DISASTER.

STRATEGIES:

NEH GRANTS HELPED develop three of the most important programs in comprehensive art conservation education, at SUNY-Buffalo, Winterthur-University of Delaware, and NYU-Institute of Fine Arts. Supported by numerous NEH grants, these institutions train generations of conservation professionals in the methods and techniques of collections care and management necessary to safeguard the cultural heritage objects. Graduates have gone on to work on such major conservation projects as the Star-Spangled Banner, the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson's Bible, the space suit Neil Armstrong wore as he walked on the moon, the *Star Trek* starship USS *Enterprise*, and the original *Star Wars* character C-3PO.

STREAMLINE PROCESS for awarding chairman's grants for emergency efforts relating to natural disasters.

PROVIDE PROFESSIONAL development opportunities for preservationists to prepare and respond to natural disasters.



—New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina / Lt. Commander Mark Moran / NOAA Corps, NMAO/AOC

NEH HAS LONG SUPPORTED essential papers projects documenting the lives and work of our nation’s Founders. The Papers of George Washington at the University of Virginia, the Papers of Thomas Jefferson at Princeton University, the Papers of John Adams at the Massachusetts Historical Society, the Papers of James Madison at the University of Virginia, and the Papers of Benjamin Franklin at Yale University are among numerous scholarly editing projects that NEH has supported, in keeping with its founding legislation.

OBJECTIVE 2—ASSUME LEADERSHIP ROLE IN CELEBRATING THE 250TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNITED STATES.

DESIGN NEW AGENCY INITIATIVES involving American history to be implemented in coordination with the semiquincentennial celebration.

MAKE AVAILABLE NEH’S grantmaking expertise and peer-review process to other federal agencies awarding grants for the semiquincentennial celebration.

BUILD ON PREVIOUS SUCCESSFUL chairman’s initiatives celebrating American history and culture such as “Picturing America” and “We the People.”

FUND PROJECTS on the role of the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights, civil society, and civics in American life.

FUND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS with tailored teaching kits for young learners on great themes in U.S. history, such as the American Revolution, the Civil War, the Space Race, and the advancement of science and technology.

FUND PROJECTS that would advance the public’s knowledge of the country’s history and governing principles

OBJECTIVE 3—COORDINATE FEDERAL EFFORTS TO PRESERVE IMPERILED WORLD HERITAGE ARTIFACTS IN AREAS OF CONFLICT.

ASSIST IN CULTURAL HERITAGE COORDINATING COMMITTEE efforts to link subject matter experts with federal agencies that seek to protect imperiled art or artifacts.

STRATEGIES:

STRATEGY:

IN 2015, NEH ANNOUNCED a special encouragement for the study, documentation, and preservation of imperiled cultural heritage materials. In war-ravaged countries, the threat to precious artifacts of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam is particularly grave. The Hill Museum and Manuscript Library, under the leadership of Father Columba Stewart, not only photographs and digitizes important religious manuscripts of various traditions, with the help of NEH it is upgrading its online library to make such materials more accessible to scholars all over the world.



—Courtesy University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and Creighton University

The National Endowment for the Humanities is an independent federal agency created in 1965. It is one of the largest funders of humanities programs in the United States. The Endowment serves and strengthens our Republic by promoting excellence in the humanities and conveying the lessons of history to all Americans. NEH-supported grant programs foster scholarship and research, enrich all levels of education, preserve cultural treasures, and encourage public understanding of the humanities. NEH has funded landmark projects throughout its 50-year history. It has awarded more than 64,000 grants since 1965, totaling \$5.5 billion and has leveraged in today's dollars nearly \$4.1 billion in private matching donations. That public investment has led to the creation of books, films, museum exhibits, online resources, and exciting discoveries. NEH is a major funder of Presidential Papers projects.

NEH-FUNDED PROJECTS SUCH AS Ken Burns's documentary film *The Civil War* transformed how documentary films have been made and has demonstrated how the success of a single film can have countless cultural consequences. Another transformative NEH-funded project was the "Treasures of Tutankhamun," the King Tut exhibition that opened at the National Gallery of Art and traveled throughout the United States from 1976 to 1979. It was a cultural phenomenon forcing host museums to develop new ticketing and security systems to accommodate the crush of people who wanted to experience ancient Egypt up close.

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