

Public Talking Points for Use by Supporters

What are humanities councils?

Our nation's 56 state and jurisdictional humanities councils are nonpartisan 501(c)3 nonprofit organizations established in 1971 by Congress to make outstanding public humanities programming accessible to everyday Americans. Councils' primary source of funding comes through the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Funds sent to the councils by NEH are locally controlled and used by councils to create locally-tailored programs and distribute grants to American institutions like historical societies, museums, heritage sites, and schools.

What do humanities councils do?

Every council creates unique programs and grants based on local needs, but here are just a few examples:

- Life-saving programs for veterans that honor their service
- Family reading and literacy programs
- History programs commemorating the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence
- Vital support for K-12 teachers and students
- National History Day programs for students across the country
- Funding for rural museums and historical societies
- Book and cultural festivals that draw tourism and private investment
- AND SO MUCH MORE

In our state, our most impactful programs and grants are_____.

If we lose NEH funding, then we will be impacted in this way: **[what will be lost/cut]**.

What is the NEH budget?

The NEH's overall budget was \$207 million in 2024. Within that, \$65 million of that is appropriated by Congress for humanities councils through the NEH Office of Federal/State Partnership.

How are humanities councils funded?

Humanities councils are funded by Congress through an appropriation line in the annual budget of the National Endowment for the Humanities. NEH uses a formula set by its founding legislation to calculate the amount each state and jurisdictional humanities council receives.

Why does the Federal government fund humanities?

The rationale for establishing the NEH and funding humanities on a Federal level was explained in 1965 in its [founding legislation](#):

“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.

Democracy demands wisdom and vision in its citizens. It must therefore foster and support a form of education, and access to the arts and the humanities, designed to make people of all backgrounds and wherever located masters of their technology and not its unthinking servants.”

Federal funding ensures that humanities and cultural programs don't just happen in rich or urban communities. Humanities councils reach every corner of their states and jurisdictions. Federal funding allows them to offer equal grants and programs to individuals and organizations in small town and rural areas.

Why do we need humanities councils?

Humanities councils are the most direct and concrete way for federal dollars to reach local constituents and institutions. Many small local organizations (like historical societies and rural school districts) do not have the capacity or training to compete for federal and private grants. Humanities council grants are simple to apply for, offered throughout the year, and reviewed locally with the capacity of small organizations in mind.