

Creative States Coalition Federal Advocacy Resources HOW TO TAKE ACTION

Based on Principles and Data



The State of the Arts Is in Turmoil

Cuts to the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) threaten not only the future of the arts, but also the preservation of our shared cultural and historical legacy. Without proper funding, art education, creative innovation, and the historical narratives carried through artistic expression will fade. This is a pivotal moment—and we must act.

Together, we can make a difference. By petitioning our lawmakers, we can ensure that the arts continue to thrive and that future generations have access to the inspiration, education, and expression that only the arts can provide.

Your voice matters. A simple letter to your local representatives can help preserve the arts, protect arts education, and safeguard the stories that define us.

Click the link below to learn more and to personalize your letter to your area's lawmakers.

We are stronger, louder, and more effective together. Let's raise our voices and take a stand—for the arts, for our history, and for the legacy we leave behind.

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Please share these resources with those who love the arts and humanity.
Together we can win.

Dear Creative States Coalition Members and Supporters,

Thank you for your unwavering leadership and advocacy during this moment of upheaval. Our federal cultural agencies are confronting existential threats—and the stakes could not be higher.

This is the time to act. We must rally around our democratic principles and demand that our elected officials safeguard and rebuild our arts and cultural infrastructure—not simply for its own sake, but for its power to strengthen communities, protect free expression, and uphold our collective humanity.

Immediate priority: protect the NEA & restore NEH and IMLS. We must push for robust support for the National Endowment for the Arts ahead of executive action, even as we fight to restore essential funding to the NEH and IMLS.

Take Action: Congress and Attorneys General

We've developed two rapid-response advocacy tools to help you develop action alerts for your networks to contact members of Congress and your state attorneys general:

Protect the NEA, Restore the NEH and IMLS (Congress): TWO campaigns for action: one for before DOGE acts on NEA, and one for after. (Each campaign includes: email to Congress, campaign description, and sample email to advocate) If you use Quorum through AFTA, you will likely need to email Olivia to turn on Federal Officials.

Letter to Attorneys General on Cultural Agencies: TWO AG action letters: one for AGs who are already taking action on IMLS and one for AGs who aren't part of current actions.

Stand with National Campaigns

We know that not everyone can mount an advocacy campaign, so please join forces with other cultural advocacy efforts across the country:

- [American Alliance of Museums - Institute of Museum and Library Services \(IMLS\) Campaign](#)
- [American Library Association - Institute of Museum and Library Services \(IMLS\) Campaign](#)
- [National Humanities Alliance - National Endowment for the Humanities Campaign](#)
- [Federation of State Humanities Councils - National Endowment for the Humanities Campaign](#)

Tools for Collective Power

Fuel your advocacy with these key resources shared by members of this coalition:

- [Mapping NEA, NEH, IMLS Grant Impact](#)
- [Arts NC What the Federal is Happening?](#)
- [Creative West Action Center](#)
- [DOGE Cuts by City, State, and Congressional District](#)
- [Executive Orders Affecting Charitable Nonprofits](#)
- [Litigation Tracker: Legal Challenges to Trump Administration Actions](#)
- [Alliance for Justice's Bolder Advocacy resource library](#)
- [Othering & Belonging's Advancing Racial Equity: Legal Guidance for Advocates](#)

Our work as advocates for the creative sector is absolutely vital to our democracy and the fabric of our communities. In this critical moment, our voices, our courage, and our collective power are what will make the difference.

In solidarity,
CSC Co-Chairs
Claire Rice, David Holland, Nate McGaha

EMAIL TO CONGRESS

Subject: Protect the NEA, Restore the NEH and IMLS

Senator/Representative,

As a constituent that values not only the arts and culture, but also the authority granted to Congress by the United States Constitution, I implore you to take immediate action to protect the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and restore all funding and staffing to the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS). As my elected representative I ask that you defend these agencies and the American values they represent.

These agencies were created by Congress, and Congress has fully funded them through the end of fiscal year 2025. However, recent actions at the NEH and IMLS (and soon the NEA) by the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) have stripped those agencies of both their public funding and public servants, leaving them unable to fulfill their Congressional mandates which include:

NEA supporting the arts and arts agencies in every state and territory.

NEH supporting the humanities and humanities councils in every state and territory.

IMLS supporting museums and especially libraries in every state and territory.

The NEA and NEH make up only 0.003% each of the overall federal budget and work to support more than just the nonprofit arts sector, which alone generates more than \$150 billion dollars in economic activity to the American economy and supports more than 2.6 million jobs. IMLS accounts for only 0.0046% of the federal budget and serves a sector that supports more than 726,000 jobs and generates over \$50 billion dollars in economic benefit. This is a small investment for a huge return. This is not just good government; this is good business.

The dismantling of these agencies has already caused damage throughout the country, costing not only jobs, but also educational and community programs in rural areas and with other undeserved populations. The consequences of these reckless actions are now surfacing, and the reality of what we may lose is starting to become clear. Will there be no library programs for seniors and children in rural communities, or no art therapy that addresses the unique and special needs of military patients and veterans diagnosed with traumatic brain injury (TBI) and psychological health conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)? I hope you will act before we find out.

These agencies are being dismantled on your watch, in direct defiance of the branch of the federal government in which you were elected to serve. I urge you to protect and defend the NEA, NEH, and IMLS, as well as your congressional authority, for the betterment of your constituents, our state, and the entire nation.

Thank you for your leadership and service.

April Letter to Attorneys General on Cultural Agencies

VERSION 1 Letter to Attorneys General - “THANK YOU and we need you to keep going” (From these states who have joined the lawsuit: Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington and Wisconsin) This could either be framed from your organization, or easily edited to be a campaign to the AG from your network.

[Your Organization’s Letterhead]

[Date]

The Honorable [Name of Attorney General]

Office of the Attorney General

[Address]

[City, State, ZIP Code]

Dear Attorney General [Last Name],

As our state’s primary advocate for the power of arts and culture, we write to express our heartfelt gratitude for your steadfast support in challenging the Trump administration’s executive orders that gutted funding for the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). Your leadership in joining the lawsuit to restore this vital cultural funding is a testament to your commitment to preserving our nation’s heritage and ensuring access to the educational and cultural resources that enrich the lives of all Americans.

As your office continues to defend the IMLS, we urge you to consider similar action to protect the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). Like the IMLS, the NEH plays a crucial role in preserving American history and supporting educational initiatives through grants to museums, libraries, and humanities organizations. The actions that eviscerated the NEH’s funding are an alarming blow to the cultural fabric of our nation, and we strongly believe that legal action is needed to restore the critical support it provides to millions of Americans, especially those across [INSERT YOUR STATE] through direct grants and our state humanities council [OR INSERT ORG NAME].

The NEH’s funding is essential for many institutions, particularly those in rural and underserved communities, where access to humanities education, resources, and research is limited. The NEH empowers these communities to preserve local history, foster public dialogue, and inspire generations of students to engage with their nation’s rich and diverse cultural landscape. Stripping these resources away will undoubtedly harm the cultural and educational infrastructure of [STATE], a lingering consequence for years to come.

Furthermore, we are deeply concerned about the ongoing threats to the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), which is currently facing similar efforts through DOGE to drastically reduce its funding or eliminate it altogether. While the NEA’s budget is minuscule in comparison to other federal expenditures (.003% of the total federal budget), its impact on American arts and culture is immeasurable. The NEA helps to make the arts accessible to all Americans, regardless of socioeconomic status or geographic location. The NEA’s funding supports countless local artists, theaters, galleries, and other cultural institutions, driving economic growth and fostering community engagement in [STATE]. Just as we have seen the value of IMLS and NEH funding, the NEA’s role in uplifting our cultural landscape cannot be overstated, and we anticipate that defending its future will require similar action.

We ask that you consider supporting legal action to restore NEH funding in the same way you have fought for IMLS. Your continued leadership in this area will ensure that our nation's cultural institutions are protected and that future generations can continue to benefit from the educational, historical, and artistic opportunities that these agencies provide.

Your office has demonstrated remarkable commitment to defending the cultural resources that sustain our communities and our national identity. We are confident that, with your support, we can work together to restore and preserve the vital funding that makes these institutions possible. We are ready to offer any assistance or resources you may need as you continue your work in this important area. Thank you again for your continued dedication to preserving the cultural fabric of [STATE], and we look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Title]

[Organization Name]

[Contact Information]

[Organization Website]

Cc: State humanities council and/or other partners you deem appropriate

VERSION 2 Letter to Attorneys General - “Please consider joining and supporting” (Advocacy Org in any state other than listed above). This could either be framed from your organization, or easily edited to be a campaign to the AG from your network.

[Your Organization’s Letterhead]

[Date]

The Honorable [Name of Attorney General]

Office of the Attorney General

[Address]

[City, State, ZIP Code]

Dear Attorney General [Last Name],

As our state’s primary advocate for the power of arts and culture, we respectfully write to express our deep concern regarding the actions taken by DOGE and the Trump Administration that have gutted the fabric of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), making it difficult for them to fulfill their statutory responsibility enacted by Congress. We urge you to support legal actions to restore the vital funding these agencies provide to cultural institutions across [INSERT YOUR STATE]. Additionally, we would like to draw attention to the ongoing threats to the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), which may require further legal or legislative intervention.

The IMLS and NEH serve as pillars of cultural education, historic preservation, and community engagement, fostering an understanding of our nation’s diverse story. These agencies provide essential support to libraries, museums, and educational institutions, particularly in rural and underserved areas. The executive orders have devastated their budgets and all but eliminated their ability to support and amplify the cultural heritage of [STATE]. Cutting these agencies to the bone also contradicts the values we hold dear as Americans—values of education, civic engagement, and the preservation of history for future generations.

We believe that the programs funded by the IMLS and NEH are critical not only to the growth of our citizens but also to the protection of our national identity. These institutions—ranging from small local museums to large university libraries—offer invaluable resources for education, research, and cultural enrichment. By supporting these institutions, we honor the contributions of past generations and ensure that our cultural narrative continues to evolve in a manner that reflects the depth of the American experience.

The IMLS, NEH, and NEA are not bloated bureaucracies; they are efficient, results-driven agencies that benefit millions of Americans annually and all three agencies combined represent only .01% of the federal budget. Rather than being a wasteful expenditure, their work helps build stronger communities, support local economies, and encourage civic pride.

We are also aware of DOGE presence and the potential to eliminate or severely restrict the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). While we recognize the importance of fiscal restraint, we must emphasize that the NEA’s funding is a modest investment that yields disproportionately positive returns, through significant economic impact of the organizations it supports, as well as the programs they provide to connect local communities across [STATE], fostering unity in our divided society. We urge you to stand with us in preserving the NEA, a vital resource for supporting American arts and culture.

We ask that you lend your support to the growing movement to challenge these executive orders through legal means. By doing so, you will not only defend cultural funding but also help secure the future of institutions that embody the very best of American values. Your leadership will send a strong message about the importance of preserving the arts, history, and culture as cornerstones of American society.

We thank you for your consideration of this critical issue, and we look forward to your response and support in the fight to restore cultural funding. If you have any questions or would like further information about the impact of these cuts, we are happy to provide additional materials.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Title]

[Organization Name]

[Contact Information]

[Organization Website]

Cc: State humanities council and/or other partners you deem appropriate