

Frequently Asked Questions about Threats to Humanities Funding

In FY 2018, FY 2019, and FY 2020 budget requests, the Trump administration has proposed elimination of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). There have been proposals to eliminate or reduce funding for NEH for decades, with the most serious occurring in 1995. **But in recent years, bipartisan congressional support for NEH and the state humanities councils has been widespread.**

What Precisely is at Risk Nationally?

For FY 2019, NEH received \$155 million, of which \$48 million was directed to the 56 state humanities councils. Funding at these levels has enabled NEH and the councils to carry out programs that would be in jeopardy if NEH were eliminated.

The 56 state humanities councils play a key role in communities throughout the nation. Councils reach **over 5,300 communities** – rural, suburban, and urban – **in nearly every Congressional district** each year. Councils extend their reach by partnering with **over 9,200 organizations each year**, including museums and libraries, K-12 schools and universities, veterans programs, local government, community development organizations, social service agencies, corporations and local businesses, and media outlets. These extensive partnerships enabled councils to serve over **44 million** people through in-person events and almost **120 million** people through virtual events in 2015. **For every federal dollar received from NEH, state humanities councils leverage \$4.**

What Precisely is at Risk in Pennsylvania?

NEH funding is a tiny portion of the overall federal budget, but it has a big impact on our state. NEH brought \$24.4 million in federal dollars to Pennsylvania in the last five years, including funds for the Pennsylvania Humanities Council (PHC) and other humanities organizations.

The federal dollars NEH provides PHC are essential for the public good -- to provide access and equity -- to low income kids; to veterans who haven't had access to higher education; to people in small towns/cities who don't typically participate in political processes. PHC programs—like Teen Reading Lounge and Pennsylvania Heart & Soul—reach communities across the commonwealth and help build capacity to achieve long-term goals, from engaging teens in strengthening skills for school and life, to coaching residents as they plan a better future for their town.

Can NEH be Closed by Executive Order?

The President cannot close down an agency through executive branch action alone. NEH could be defunded only through the Congressional appropriations process.

What Are the Dates and Events to Watch?

We are currently advocating for FY 2020, which begins October 1, 2019. The Congressional appropriations process for FY 2020 is under way now. If it stays on track, an appropriations bill will be signed in September 2019.