TEXANS FOR THE ARTS

Texans for the Arts

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Empowering Arts Advocates Across Texas

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Texas Arts Appropriations Cuts Amplified by Potential NEA Elimination

Dear Texas arts leaders and activists:

We all woke up to news that has been anticipated, but is now really hitting home.

The new federal administration has formally announced plans to eliminate the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities (and reduce funding to a whole lot of other agencies, as well). It is not a done deal yet and the budget process will be protracted, but the intention is loud and clear.

This is not just about the arts. This is about access, creativity, equity, community, history, and heritage. That means it's about everyone in this country, and everyone should care. Please be prepared to speak up. Loudly. We need your voice, and the voices of many others who care about Texas's, and the country's, future.

News reports:

- Trump Proposes Eliminating the Arts and Humanities Endowments - *The New York Times*
- Trump budget proposes entirely eliminating National Endowment for the Arts - *The Hill*
- What's getting cut in Trump's budget - *Washington Post*

Next Monday-Tuesday, Texans for the Arts joins Americans for the Arts and its peers from around the country to meet with our Texas Senators and Congressmen/women about the NEA/NEH and a host of other important arts related issues.

There are still opportunities to save these federal agencies and raise your voice in support of funding for the Texas Commission on the arts.

What can you do? Plenty, and we'll keep you in the loop at all times. For now:

From Texans for the Arts - at the federal level:

- Contact your House and Senate delegations. Urge them to oppose the President's request and provide full funding for the NEA.
- See if your state is represented on either the House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee or the Senate Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies. If so, your outreach to these committee members will be especially influential.
- Remind your delegation that 40% of the grant dollars appropriated to the NEA go to states and regions. These funds address state priorities. Rural and low-income areas would be disproportionally hurt by the elimination of the agency.
- Use your social media channels to propagate this legislative alert, Fact vs. Fiction: Government Arts Funding and Five Essential Arts Arguments.
- Follow Texans for the Arts on **Facebook** and **Twitter** for timely updates on issues
- Check **Texans for the Arts website** for details on specific issues and news and calls to action in support of the Texas Commission on the Arts
- Make sure you, your colleagues, and your friends are signed up to receive Texans for the Arts' **Arts Action Alerts**.
- **Americans for the Arts (AFTA)** has established an ***Arts Mobilization Center*** for up to the minute info on the arts at the federal level, and sign up for the **Arts Action Fund**.
- From TOPOS (Transforming the Landscape of Public Understanding) and our Texans for the Art Arts Advocacy Day keynote Margy Waller: ***Tips for Talking NEA***

Along with breaking news at the national level, Texans for the Arts is balancing work at the 85th Texas State Legislative Session. And it isn't pretty there either.

The Texas Commission on the Arts learned just yesterday that the Senate Finance Committee has recommended a 34% CUT to the TCA's appropriation which includes ZEROING out the Cultural & Fine Arts District funding and slashing the TCA's arts education budget by $1.4 million. With today's news about the potential loss of NEA funding (which would mean an additional cut of $1,928,200 to the TCA's budget), it would amount to a recommended budget of 43% LESS than the 84th Session biennium. We have yet to be apprised of any other Texas State Agency that is being asked to take a 43% cut!

The Texas House Appropriations Committee Budget recommendations are more hopeful, maintain the arts education funding, and place the Cultural & Fine Arts District appropriation in Article 11 and in Riders submitted by supportive Representatives (thank you!).

We will follow up first thing next week with Actions to be taken at the State level! Stay tuned and lots more to come.

Thank you for adding your voice to these important issues!

Ann S. Graham
Executive Director
Texans for the Arts

PS Thank you to Americans for the Arts, the National Association of State Arts Agencies, Arts Wisconsin, and the State Arts Action Networtk for their leadership and for their sharing of information cited above.

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