



OREGON ARTS
COMMISSION

Statement on Oregon arts funding February 2017

Dear Arts Supporters,

Many of you have reached out to inquire about the importance of national funding to the arts in Oregon. We'd like to take this opportunity to share information on how national and state funding partner to support arts organizations and artists across the state.

We know that funding of arts and culture in Oregon is comprised of many sources of revenue including public, private, individual and corporate giving. It's safe to say, however, that without public support many arts organizations would be in jeopardy.

The National Endowment for the Arts allocates 40 percent (\$41.2 million) of its annual appropriation to funding the nation's state arts agencies. Combined, NEA and state arts agency grants reached all 435 Congressional districts. In fiscal year 2016 our Arts Commission received \$727,700 in NEA Partnership funding to support grants and services. Combined with our state funding it allowed the Arts Commission to award 267 grants totaling more than \$2.1 million. In addition, the NEA made 32 direct grants to Oregon arts organizations and projects totaling \$795,000, bringing the total for NEA funding in Oregon to \$1,522,700 for fiscal year 2016.

NEA funding is vital to the 50 states and six U.S. jurisdictions. The Oregon Arts Commission was created 50 years ago, shortly after the NEA was established. Since 2000 it has received \$11 million in NEA funding, which was matched by \$25.8 in state funding. NEA and Arts Commission funding for the arts has leveraged more than \$238 million in local and regional support to Oregon arts organizations. In addition, the funding allows the 186 Oregon organizations that receive operating support grants to employ 1,946 people.

But it's not just about the numbers. Combined NEA and Arts Commission funding support a variety of educational, community building, outreach and other services across the state. Hopefully, you receive our monthly newsletter where we highlight amazing programs and projects and their impact in your communities. We tell you stories every chance we have to describe how the arts: serve as an economic driver; provide lifelong learning; support health and wellness; act as a civic catalyst; and encourage cultural legacies.

The NEA also supports important partnerships and projects. The Oregon Folklife Network is supported by the NEA and the Arts Commission to document our state's treasured traditional artists and practitioners who pass their art forms on to future generations. Partnership support also includes the acclaimed Poetry Out Loud program and Creativity Connects.

Our national and regional arts organizations, including the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, Americans for the Arts, the Western States Arts Federation and others keep a very close watch on national funding. The CEOs and lobbyists for these organizations regularly meet with members of Congress and policy advisers.

Very recently Oregon Arts Commission Chair Libby Tower and I visited our Oregon Congressional delegation in Washington D.C. and met with each member or their staff. The meetings provided an opportunity to relay information about the importance of government funding for the arts and the important impact of NEA funding in our state.

Public investment in the arts is one of the important characteristics of an enlightened society. It recognizes that our art defines and reflects us as a people while expressing what words cannot say. We know that arts and culture are highly valued as a part of everyday life for Oregonians. As I travel around our state I see people from our diverse communities expressing themselves creatively and connecting with others. The arts deepen our civic pride and Oregon's famous quality of life.

We encourage you to stay informed and involved in this important conversation.
Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brian Rogers', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Brian Rogers, Executive Director
Oregon Arts Commission