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[NYC Arts Groups Could Take Hit With Proposed Trump Budget](#)

By city, New York City arts groups receive the most contributions from the National Endowment for the Arts

By MELANIE GRAYCE WEST



A budget proposal from the Trump administration that would abolish the National Endowment for the Arts has shaken up New York City administrators and artists, with many of them now bracing for steep funding cutbacks.

“It’s so heartbreaking I want to cry,” said Ellen Kodadek, executive and artistic director of Flushing Town Hall. “I almost don’t know how to talk about it.”

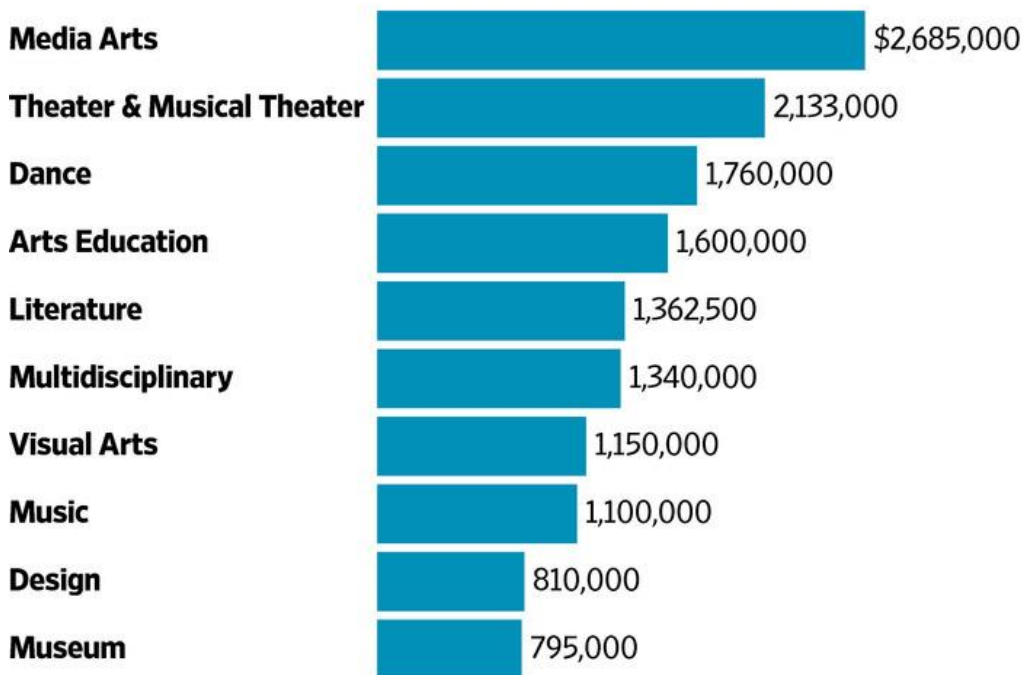
The nonprofit has for decades put on cultural events aimed at appealing to the highly diverse Queens neighborhood, receiving regular support for its programming from the NEA.

Flushing Town Hall’s “Global Mash Up” series, for example, brings artists with different music styles from different cultures together for a jam session. That series, which kicks off this month, was funded in part with a \$25,000 grant from the NEA. Additional funds for the series, said Ms. Kodadek, were secured in part because of the NEA backing.

A White House official said NEA funding of the arts represents a small portion of funding for these programs, with the vast majority coming from the private sector. State arts agencies are funded at about \$300 million, said the official. Nationally, 2015 private-sector giving to the arts, culture and humanities, either by individuals, foundations or corporations, totaled approximately \$17 billion. Congress will ultimately decide the size of any cutbacks in arts funding.

Culture Cash

Overall value of National Endowment for the Arts grants to the top 10 recipients in New York state, by discipline



Source: Center for an Urban Future

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The NEA gave roughly 10% of its nearly \$150 million annual budget to arts groups in New York City in the last fiscal year, more than any other city.

According to the Center for an Urban Future, a New York-based nonpartisan policy group, from 1998 to 2016 more than 7,500 grants totaling almost \$270 million flowed to the city's cultural organizations. In fiscal 2016, \$15.5 million in NEA money was awarded to 425 arts organizations in New York City.

Most grants went to small organizations without sophisticated channels to major philanthropists.

Nearly 100 NEA grants in the amount of \$10,000 were made to groups across the state in 2016, including a grant to the American Tap Dance Foundation to support educational activities and performances. The largest grant in 2016, more than \$750,000, went to the New York State Council on the Arts to support partnership agreements with arts groups.

Grants touched mega organizations like Lincoln Center, and smaller places like the Children’s Museum of Manhattan, which used a recent grant of \$15,000 to support a Muslim artist series. The NEA grants, said Andrew Ackman, executive director of the museum, are vital to jump-start new initiatives and attract private and city funding to serve a children’s audience “that is often not part of the arts and cultural community.”



The proposed cuts now, said Mr. Ackman, seem “broader in terms of devaluing the arts and humanities.”

Lane Harwell, executive director of Dance NYC, an advocacy and trade group, said that many arts groups are wrestling with a new narrative against the cuts and are working to develop a fresh case for federal support of arts funding.

That new argument, said Mr. Harwell, could be the so-called arts-multiplier, in that art drives

tourism, ticket sales, business at restaurants and hotels, creates artistic and technical jobs and, ultimately, tax revenue. Eliminating the NEA, in turn, is bad business.

“Arts organizations don’t like to make those cases because those aren’t the reasons they do their work,” said Mr. Harwell. “But the data is there and any case for eliminating the endowment should take it into account.”