

A vigorous democracy periodically debates the role of government and the ways the public sector can best support the prosperity and well-being of its citizens. When those questions turn to the role of government in supporting the arts, make sure the discussion is fueled by the facts!

Fiction: Eliminating the arts will help the government balance its budget.

✓ **Fact:** The arts return [\\$22.3 billion](#) in revenue to federal, state, county and municipal governments. A strong arts sector makes it *easier* for our government to balance its books.

Fiction: Cutting government arts programs will save a lot of money.

✓ **Fact:** The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) receives a mere [0.004%](#) of the total federal budget, less than 1/2 of one hundredth of one percent. Appropriations to state arts agencies constitute just [0.04%](#) of state general funds expenditures, less than one half of one tenth of one percent. Arts cuts will harm communities without achieving real savings.

Fiction: All Republicans want to cut the arts.

✓ **Fact:** The last time a Republican President occupied the White House (2001-2008), federal appropriations to the NEA [increased by \\$40 million](#). Republicans held the majority in both houses of Congress for four of those eight years. Support for the arts is pan-partisan. Republicans and Democrats alike have track records of supporting the arts because they know it's wise economic policy and is popular with constituents.

Fiction: Government support for the arts primarily benefits the urban elite.

✓ **Fact:** Government arts support ensures that rural communities and low-income groups get their fair share of the educational and economic benefits offered by the arts. [40%](#) of NEA-supported activities take place in high-poverty neighborhoods. While 15% of the U.S. population lives in rural areas, more than [25%](#) of all state arts agency grants go to these communities. Government arts funding reaches every U.S. congressional district and most state House and Senate districts, too.

Fiction: Arts organizations are dependent on public dollars.

✓ **Fact:** Government funding is typically a small slice of the funding pie. For instance, funding from state arts agencies composes only 2.1% of total grantee revenue (source: NASAA analysis of annual statistical reports). However, these small investments pack a big punch: arts organizations use public dollars to generate earned income, secure private contributions and leverage local matching funds. Every \$1 of NEA support [leverages \\$9](#) in matching funds.

Fiction: The private sector will pick up the bill if government arts funding is cut.

✓ **Fact:** A solely private funding model would leave many American communities behind. Philanthropic giving in the United States is geographically [disproportional](#): rural areas receive only 5.5% of all grant making, a figure that has declined over time. It takes a mixture of both public and private funds to realize the full power of the arts for all Americans.

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