

NEA Emergency Paperwork Reduction Act Clearance Justification

The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) requests an emergency clearance for the agency's upcoming American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 Notice of Funding Opportunities (NOFOs) and related final reporting requirements to conform with the expedited nature of the Rescue Plan. Rescue Plan funds will help to fuel the nation's recovery from the devastating economic and health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. For the arts sector, these funds are intended to help save jobs and keep the doors open to thousands of arts organizations nationwide.

The Rescue Plan authorizes the NEA Chairman to carry out a program of grants-in-aid for proposals that focus on COVID-19 pandemic relief as follows:

2021. NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS.

In addition to amounts otherwise available, there is appropriated for fiscal year 2021, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, \$135,000,000, to remain available until expended, under the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act of 1965, as follows:

(1) Forty percent shall be for grants, and relevant administrative expenses, to State arts agencies and regional arts organizations that support organizations' programming and general operating expenses to cover up to 100 percent of the costs of the programs which the grants support, to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from the coronavirus.

(2) Sixty percent shall be for direct grants, and relevant administrative expenses, that support organizations' programming and general operating expenses to cover up to 100 percent of the costs of the programs which the grants support, to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from the coronavirus.

In response to our Rescue Plan NOFOs, we anticipate receiving approximately 8,500 applications for direct grant funds. Our plan is to issue NOFOs for funding Rescue Plan funding opportunities in late spring/early summer to allow for the commitment of funds no later than the end of Calendar Year 2021. In order to save jobs and support arts organizations, we must move in an expedited manner to receive and process grant applications, and ultimately make grant awards.

This program will be administered in accordance with the agency's enabling legislation (20 U.S.C. §954), which requires grant application review by advisory panelists and the National Council on the Arts. The information that is collected through the Rescue Plan NOFOs is necessary to review grant applications and eventually award, administer, and report out on grants. Given the Administration's and Congress's desire to award these funds quickly, the normal Paperwork Reduction Act clearance process and Federal Register notice requirements would impede our ability to provide COVID-19 relief to arts organizations through this grant program in an expedient manner.