

MEMORANDUM

TO: Shagufta Ahmed, Office of Management and Budget Desk Officer

FROM: Sunil Iyengar, Office of Research & Analysis Director and Chief Data Officer, National Endowment for the Arts

DATE: Nov. 23, 2021

RE: Expedited/emergency request for Paperwork Reduction Act approval

Pursuant to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) procedures established at 5 CFR 1320, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) asks that the following collection of information, "2022 Arts Supplement to the General Social Survey," be reviewed in accordance with section 1320.13 Emergency Processing.

The NEA seeks expedited/emergency clearance so that the agency can better monitor and report to the public the extent to which arts participation in the United States has been affected uniquely by the COVID-19 pandemic. Arts participation is widely recognized as a positive indicator of social and civic well-being. Historical data on arts participation rates—as collected by the NEA in partnership with the U.S. Census Bureau—have been included in the OMB "Social Indicators" that appear under "Performance and Management" in the President's annual budget submission. Studies in the U.S. and abroad have established strong positive relationships between arts participation and health and well-being in individuals. Designed by the NEA, the 2022 General Social Survey's Arts Supplement affords the only current vehicle for reporting how U.S. arts participation has changed as a direct result of the pandemic, and for identifying which population subgroups have not resumed these activities, and which may be underserved, having limited access. The NEA will use these data to fulfill its mission of providing all Americans with diverse opportunities for arts participation, whether in-person or virtually.

By tracking changes in arts participation during the pandemic, moreover, the NEA will gain a better understanding of how consumption patterns have affected economic recovery of the nation's arts sector. In 2019, arts and cultural industries contributed \$919.7 billion, or 4.3 percent, of the U.S. Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and accounted for 5.2 million salaried workers, earning total compensation of \$446 billion. From 2017 to 2019, arts and cultural production increased at a 3 percent clip, slightly higher than the growth rate for the economy as a whole. A year before COVID-19 hit the U.S., consumers spent \$28.5 billion on admissions to performing arts events.

Over the last year, academic, government, and industry reports have shown that arts and cultural employers and businesses are among the hardest hit by the pandemic, and likely will be the slowest to recover. In a January 2021 white paper produced for FEMA's Recovery Support Function Leadership Group, Argonne National Laboratory analysts concluded from multiple

data sources that “[a]cross the spectrum of artistic and creative endeavors, restrictions on gatherings, changes in consumer behavior (voluntary or otherwise), and severe unemployment have taken a devastating toll on the sector.” Recognizing both the outsized economic contributions of the arts and the disproportionate effects from the pandemic, Congress passed two successive relief packages (the CARES Act of 2020 and the American Rescue Plan of 2021) that included stimulus funding for arts jobs and arts and cultural venues and facilities.

Under both pieces of legislation, the NEA received special funds for the purpose of grantmaking to help the sector in its recovery. The 2022 General Social Survey’s Arts Supplement is a critical instrument for assessing the pace of that recovery, allowing the NEA to learn—by combining the survey results with other data sources—whether social and economic conditions for the arts have improved, as a result of the stimulus funding and other measures, and for which industries and subpopulations.

The General Social Survey (GSS) is conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago and funded by the National Science Foundation. It is a nationally representative survey of non-institutionalized adults in the United States and has been conducted since 1972; it is a leading source of data about societal changes and trends. In 2012, the GSS featured a “Cultural Module,” designed by the NEA to ascertain key motivations and barriers affecting arts participation in the U.S. The NEA had received Paperwork Reduction Act clearance for this module (OMB Control Number 3135-0132). In the present case, the NEA seeks expedited/emergency approval because an inability to collect the requested data in time would prevent the agency from reporting and acting upon vital information about the arts sector’s recovery from COVID-19, during and after the NEA’s administration of Congressionally-appropriated relief funds.

The NEA already has published a 60-day notice, for this proposed collection, in the *Federal Register* (Oct. 25, 2021). When that notice expires, the agency will publish a five-day *Federal Register* notice of request for emergency approval. The 2022 GSS Arts Supplement will be fielded sometime between April and November 2022. Therefore, if expedited/emergency request is granted, the NEA will submit a normal PRA clearance package, to cover any period beyond six months.

Thank you for considering this urgent request on behalf of the NEA. We look forward to your response.