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.