

NEH Grants Terminated

Dear recipient,

At 11:30pm last night, I received notice from Michael McDonald, Acting Chairman of the [National Endowment for the Humanities \(NEH\)](#), that all four of the American Musicological Society's active NEH grants had been terminated, effective 1 April 2025. These grants account for more than \$363,000 in anticipated AMS income over the next two years and provide partial funding for the following AMS programs:

1. **Many Musics of America** - A landmark [event series](#) that spotlights the richness and diversity of America's musical traditions 250 years after the signing of the Declaration of Independence.
2. **Music of the United States of America (MUSA)** - A series, begun in the 1980s, of more than forty [scholarly editions](#) featuring American musical works of exceptional artistic quality and historical significance.
3. **Musics of the United States: Telling Our Stories** - A two-week [residential Institute](#) for higher education faculty focused on updating the stories we teach about American music by incorporating new humanities research.
4. **Music Means: A Digital Platform for Exploring Music and Meaning in America** - A [planning grant](#) for the development of an interactive digital platform for teaching and learning about American music at all educational levels.

The termination of these grants was part of an agency-wide rescission that impacted all or almost all NEH grantees, including [state humanities councils](#), the frontline funders for humanities programming in the United States. The impact of these funding cuts will be profound.

As a professional historian, I am deeply distressed by the likely effects of these cuts. I can think of few other times in modern history when the people of the United States have needed the humanities more; when we have needed to reflect on history and the complexity of the human condition more than at this moment.

As the chief operating officer for the American Musicological Society, a 91-year-old knowledge society committed to the study of music, history, and culture, *I am resolved*. I am resolved to oppose these cuts and find alternative sources of funding for the affected programs. I am resolved because the loss of these programs (or a failure to fight for them) is not a small thing. It would represent an abdication of the basic duty at the heart of the humanities: to pursue truth in service of a better understanding of the human condition.

To understand why I am resolved, peruse the list of published titles on the [MUSA program page](#). I think you will be struck, as I am, by the scope and variety of the works sampled—by the way MUSA editors over nearly forty years have elevated many different musicians and musical traditions in the US. It is a deeply public-spirited project. It chronicles the contributions of people and communities that might otherwise be forgotten or overlooked. Without this project and others like it, a country and its people can easily lose their way.

If you agree with me and would like to show your opposition to these NEH grant cuts, there are several things you can do, including:

1. **Contact Congress:** If you are in the United States, please write to your representatives in Congress to protest these cuts. You can do this quickly and easily using this [web form](#).
2. **Donate / Volunteer:** Help the AMS make up for the lost funds. [Donate](#) to the AMS Annual Giving Fund. You can also give time and expertise by serving as an [AMS volunteer](#).
3. **Show Support:** Do you value these programs? Do you support AMS efforts to oppose these cuts? Tell your friends. Let us know. You can send messages via the AMS office (ams@amsmusicology.org) to AMS council or chapters representatives, the Board of Directors, or me and the AMS staff.

Thank you for being part of the AMS community. I will keep you informed of future developments.

Warmest wishes,



Siovahn A. Walker, PhD, MPA
R. F. Judd Executive Director

Siovahn A. Walker has served as R. F. Judd Executive Director of the American Musicological Society (AMS) since November 2019. She holds a PhD in medieval history from Stanford University and an MPA in advanced management and finance from Columbia University.



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