

Alabama Humanities Alliance funding cuts

Frequently asked questions

What has happened to AHA's funding?

On April 2, 2025, the federal Administration's Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) terminated the Alabama Humanities Alliance's 50-year partnership with the National Endowment for the Humanities — and, with it, two-thirds of our funding.

[Learn more about these cuts here.](#)

Is this legal?

This is a question of separation of powers that may ultimately be decided by the courts in terms of constitutionality. DOGE and the Executive Branch terminated the NEH's federal-state partnership with humanities councils nationwide. For more than half a century, our federal funding has been Congressionally appropriated through a statutory budget process.

UPDATE: On May 15, 2025, the Federation of State Humanities Councils filed a lawsuit against DOGE and the NEH, alleging the illegal termination of Congressionally established grants to state humanities councils like AHA. [Information on that lawsuit is available here.](#)

Why is this happening?

We're not sure. What we do know is that we're not the only organization impacted by recent federal cuts impacting arts, culture, and history. Other national agencies at the National Endowment for the Arts, Institute of Museums and Library Services, Smithsonian Institution, National History Day, Corporation for Public Broadcasting, and National Park Service, among others, have been affected. Those cuts also hurt our partners and grantees at Alabama's libraries, museums, historic sites, literacy organizations, arts groups, and more.

"We live in an age of abounding ironies, and this one is a doozy. Eliminating federal funding for the humanities saves next to no money, but it will cost the American people something precious: one of the few federal institutions whose whole purpose is to foster community and thoughtful discussion across the polarities that increasingly divide and depress us."

-[Margaret Renkl](#), former editor at Humanities Tennessee, an AHA sibling organization

What does this mean for the Alabama Humanities Alliance?

To put it bluntly: AHA's existence is at stake, along with the future of public humanities programming in Alabama.



If our federal funding is not restored, or if we don't secure long-term alternative funding, then AHA's grantmaking and programming will be permanently reduced, or eliminated altogether. AHA's programs covered by non-federal funding (thanks to corporate, foundation, and individual giving) are also at stake because our staff and operating expenses were covered by our federal funding.

What do these impacts look like in Alabama, right now?

All of our grantmaking was suspended statewide for 45 days. In April 2025, AHA had to inform five new grant applicants that we don't have funding available for them. These asks came from a book club, a small public library, a historic preservation alliance, an arts association, and a university — all nonprofits, from different parts of the state. All attempting to create free, public programming for their communities.

UPDATE: Thanks to generous individuals and philanthropic organizations, as of May 19, 2025, AHA has restarted its Mini Grants program, which we hope to run through the rest of 2025. These monthly grants offer up to \$2,500. Unfortunately, our triannual Major Grants (up to \$10,000 each) and our annual Media Grants (up to \$15,000 each) remain suspended.

We have also had to pause our popular Road Scholars Speakers Bureau. This program provides scholar-storytellers who give fascinating talks on our shared history, literature, folklore, art, music, and much more. The primary audience for this program is Alabama's senior citizens, and local community cornerstones rely on these speakers for programming at libraries, senior citizen centers, historical societies, and museums.

These decisions are deeply painful. We know Alabamians enjoy hearing from our Road Scholars — that's why we put on **82** talks across the state last year. And we know that 90% of our grant recipients can't put on their programming without our support. In 2024, we distributed **\$380,000** for local storytelling festivals, history projects, cultural celebrations, civics education, book clubs, art talks, documentaries, and so much more.

How can I help?

- [Donate today to the Alabama Humanities Alliance](#). We need your financial support.
- Take action: [Donate](#). [Advocate](#). [Share](#).
Have you attended an AHA-funded event? Partnered with us on a project? Seen the impact of our mission in your hometown? Those are the stories that give our elected officials the testimony they can use to advocate for us. The stories that make for compelling op-eds. The stories that we can use as we seek new funders in state.
- Please share your stories. And send them our way: ahanews@alabamahumanities.org



What else is at stake moving forward?

In short, everything. Including our:

- **Smithsonian traveling exhibits** that we bring to rural Alabama each year.
- **Stony the Road We Trod**, an immersive field study for educators, exploring Alabama's civil rights legacy.
- **Alabama History Day**, which empowers middle and high school students to become confident, curious learners.
- **Teacher workshops and scholarships** that help educators bring history, civics, and literature to life in the classroom.
- **Healing History**, an initiative that brings Alabamians together to explore our past and share our stories.
- **Alabama Colloquium**, AHA's signature public event, honoring Alabamians who use the humanities to lift up our state.
- **Mosaic magazine**, which tells the fascinating stories of Alabamians engaged in the humanities statewide.
- **Future collaborations with grantees and partners**, such as local museums, universities, historical sites and historical societies, libraries and archives, arts and culture organizations, and literacy and educational centers.

"Ultimately, what these cuts threaten is our ability to inspire a lifelong love of learning here in Alabama. And when we lose that, we lose much more than funding. We lose our ability to understand each other. We miss opportunities to strengthen our communities, as well as our economy. And we fail to make Alabama an ever more vibrant place to live."

-Chuck Holmes, executive director, Alabama Humanities Alliance

Do you have hope for the future of Alabama Humanities?

Yes, we do. And that's because of you. We have been overwhelmed by the outpouring of love and support from all who have already reached out to us. Your kind notes, your donations, your passionate advocacy. It all sustains us.

Thank you for standing with us. Thank you for believing in the value of lifelong learning — and in the power of sharing our stories with one another. This isn't a story we ever envisioned, but we are extremely grateful you're in it with us.

Stay updated at alabamahumanities.org/our-future.

