

DANCE WORKER DIGEST | AUGUST 2025

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By Dance/NYC

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This month's Dance Worker Digest covers a wave of federal actions with major implications for arts and immigrant communities. From a new executive order on federal grantmaking to proposals for NEA funding, the Trump administration and Congress are reshaping cultural policy and public spending. We also cover the administration's lawsuit against New York City's sanctuary protections and a sweeping spending and tax bill that cuts essential services for millions of Americans.

New Trump Executive Order Tightens Oversight of Federal Grantmaking



A new Trump executive order provides new guidelines on federal grantmaking, impacting dance organizations that receive federal funding through the National Endowment for the Arts or otherwise. Some of the key provisions of the order include:

- requiring plain language for grant applications, reducing some barriers
- requiring grant awards to "demonstrably advance the President's policy priorities"
- barring grant awards from being used to "promote anti-American values," with programs that support anti-racism, transgender rights, and immigration being especially vulnerable
- giving federal agencies the authority to end already given grant awards for convenience, not

just for noncompliance

- increasing reporting requirements needed to receive already awarded grant money

Taken together, these provisions expand political influence over arts funding, add new administrative burdens for organizations, and put equity-focused programs at heightened risk of losing support, potentially reinforcing inequities in the arts sector.

- [Review Trump's executive order on federal grantmaking](#)
- [Check out the Chronicle of Philanthropy's coverage on the grantmaking order](#)
- [Learn more about how the grantmaking order will impact grant recipients](#)

Photo credit: AP Photo/Evan Vucci

Congress Begins Process to Determine National Endowment for the Arts Funding



Congress has begun its appropriations process, deciding funding for many federal agencies including the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)—both vital to dance and other arts organizations nationwide.

The U.S. House has proposed \$135 million for each agency, a 35% cut from current levels. The U.S. Senate has proposed \$207 million, maintaining level funding. This comes after the Trump administration's call to eliminate the NEA, the termination of many existing NEA grants, and the defunding and shutdown of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting—part of a broader pattern of attacks on public arts and humanities infrastructure.

In September, Congress will negotiate a final budget. In recent years, the final number has matched the Senate's proposal, meaning advocates have a strong opportunity to protect current funding levels. Dance/NYC will share more advocacy resources in September to protect the NEA and NEH.

- [Learn more about the proposed NEA & NEH funding numbers](#)
- [Review what happened with NEA grant terminations in May](#)
- [Learn more about impacts on the Corporation for Public Broadcasting](#)

Photo credit: Graeme Sloan/Sipa USA/Alamy Live News

Trump Administration Sues NYC Over Sanctuary City and Other Immigrant Rights Protections



In late July, the Trump administration sued New York City over sanctuary city laws, which limit cooperation between city officials and federal immigration enforcement. This case is part of a broader series of administration lawsuits targeting sanctuary policies, including ongoing challenges in Los Angeles and an unsuccessful one in Chicago.

The suit is one of three currently aimed at New York's immigrant rights protections. Others target the Green Light Law, which allows all New Yorkers—regardless of immigration status—to obtain a driver's license, and the Protect our Courts Act, which bars ICE from staking out state courthouses (but not federal ones, where most NYC arrests have occurred). These legal

challenges come amid Mayor Adams's attacks on sanctuary laws.

For now, all three protections remain in place. Civil rights groups are actively defending them in court, while immigration organizers and advocates are pushing for a special legislative session for the passage of the New York for All Act, which would expand sanctuary protections statewide.

- [Support the New York for All Act](#)
- [Learn more and support the NY Dignity not Detention Act](#)
- [Review coverage on Trump's NYC sanctuary city lawsuit](#)
- [Review coverage on Trump's Protect our Courts lawsuit](#)
- [Review coverage on Trump's Green Light Law lawsuit](#)

Congress Passes Major Spending and Tax Bill, Slashing Essential Services



In July, Congress passed the "One Big Beautiful Bill Act," cutting essential services for working-class communities while approving \$3.3 trillion in tax cuts that disproportionately benefit the most wealthy households. While the bill's impacts are far-reaching, several provisions directly affect dance workers and our communities. Overall, the bill advances cultural and economic priorities that risk deepening inequities in arts funding and access, while sidelining the needs of working artists and communities.

- [Learn more about the overall impacts of the new spending bill](#)
- [Phone bank to protect New York against federal cuts](#)

Healthcare: The bill approves the largest cuts to Medicaid and Medicare ever, which the Congressional Budget Office estimates will cause 16 million Americans to lose their healthcare coverage.

- [Learn more about the New York State healthcare impacts](#)
- [Join the Campaign for New York Health](#)
- [Review the Freelancers' Guide to Health Insurance](#)

Food security: The bill cuts the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, causing an estimated 22 million families to lose some or all SNAP benefits.

- [Learn more about the impacts to SNAP](#)
- [Find free food help in NYC](#)

Immigration: The bill provides more than \$150 billion for immigration enforcement while rolling back asylum and child welfare protections.

- [Review New York Immigration Coalition's statement on the immigration impact](#)
- [Check out Make the Road NY's "We Protect Us" immigration resources](#)

Nonprofits: The bill is estimated to reduce resources available to nonprofit organizations by disincentivizing charitable giving, which will significantly affect the nonprofit dance sector.

- [Review the impact on nonprofits](#)

Arts and culture: The bill directs \$40 million toward Trump's "Garden of Heroes," conceived in response to the removal of Confederate statues, and allocates \$250 million to the "Make Kennedy Center Great Again" initiative. It also limits access to arts education by making some lower-earning degree programs ineligible for federal student loan support, disproportionately affecting students pursuing arts degrees.

- [Learn more about the impact on arts and culture](#)
- [Learn more about the impacts on federal student loans](#)

