

ACADEMY AWARDS MUSEUM SUBSIDY

QUICK STATS

- ✘ **CONFERENCE:** Spending
- ✘ **TEAM:** National Endowment for the Arts
- **FUMBLE:** \$25,000 for a grant to fund the Oscars museum
- **HOW TO RECOVER THE BALL:** Increased oversight of the award-making process

And the Oscar for Hollywood's best supporting government agency goes to...the NEA!

NEA announced in April that it would award a \$25,000 grant to the Academy of Motion Picture and Science's planned museum. According to NEA, the grant will support the planning of the historical exhibition and specifically will "solidify content and interpretive strategies to build on a series of design charrettes held with filmmakers, artists, scholars, and experts in a range of disciplines that helped to define the exhibition's interpretive approaches."⁴⁸ The \$388 million museum, which is expected to open in 2017, aspires to "celebrate the rich history of Hollywood and filmmaking worldwide and will take a look behind the screen at the artistry and technological creativity that have made those unforgettable cinematic moments possible."⁴⁹

While film buffs are likely elated by the planned museum, most Americans will question the need for their tax dollars to help roll out the red carpet for the well-heeled organization. For instance the fundraising campaign for the museum was able to generate \$250 million in "record time."⁵⁰ In the summer of 2014, the project managers expanded the fundraising goal by \$50 million to create "really expansive and immersive exhibitions and programs within the museum, and then arriving at some contingencies just to buffer the budget and give

us a little bit of flexibility."⁵¹ Not only does the Academy have an impressive capacity to fundraise from donors, it has a tremendous amount of internal revenue-generating capability. In 2013 the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences generated \$101.5 million in revenues, primarily through the Oscars, and held a net asset balance of \$231.5 million.⁵² Given its substantial financial prowess, the fact that the Academy even applied for a federal grant is disconcerting. The fact that it was awarded is unconscionable.



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RECOVERY

Supporting the arts is a noble endeavor. In this case American moviegoers already contribute significant support to the box office every year to enjoy their favorite Hollywood stars and storylines. They should not be expected to contribute their tax dollars as well.

For more information, please visit:

[National Endowment for the Arts: FY2015 Spring Grant Announcement](#)

[Oscars: About](#)

[Los Angeles Times: Film academy's museum gets \\$25,000 grant from the NEA](#)

[Hollywood Reporter: Academy Museum Fundraising Chief to Step Down](#)

[Guidestar: Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax](#)