

Trump Administration Seeks Artists for 'Garden of Heroes' Statues

Those selected would receive up to \$200,000 to create one of the 250 sculptures, which will be paid for in part with canceled grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities.



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By **Jennifer Schuessler**

April 24, 2025 Updated 6:49 p.m. ET

The National Endowment for the Humanities announced on Thursday a grant program to support President Trump's National Garden of American Heroes, the first concrete step toward realizing one of his central priorities for the 250th anniversary of American independence.

The garden, which was announced during Mr. Trump's first term, will feature life-size renderings of "250 great individuals from America's past who have contributed to our cultural, scientific and political heritage," according to a news release. The endowment is now requesting "preliminary concepts" for individual statues from artists who must be American citizens; those who are selected will receive awards of up to \$200,000 per statue, which must be made of marble, granite, bronze, copper or brass.

All submissions must depict figures from a long, eclectic list issued in a previous executive order, which included traditional heroes like George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Sacagawea, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the Wright brothers alongside figures like Walt Whitman, Kobe Bryant, Julia Child, Johnny Cash and Hannah Arendt. Mr. Trump has also directed that subjects be depicted in a "realistic" manner, with no modernist or abstract designs allowed.

While no site for the garden has been determined, it will be “a public space where Americans can gather to learn about and honor American heroes,” the release said. According to an earlier executive order, responsibility for setting the final list of 250 people lies with Vince Haley, the chair of the president’s Domestic Policy Council, who is also overseeing broader White House efforts related to the 250th anniversary.

The agency’s release confirmed earlier reports that the program would be paid for in part with \$34 million committed jointly by the N.E.H. and the National Endowment for the Arts, each of which had a budget of roughly \$207 million last year.

The announcement came weeks after a major shake-up at the humanities endowment, which is currently led by Michael McDonald, a longtime employee who became interim director after the previous director, Shelly Lowe, left at Mr. Trump’s direction.

Following visits from employees of Elon Musk’s Department of Government Efficiency, the endowment laid off nearly two-thirds of its staff of about 180 and canceled most existing grants, which had supported museums, historical sites and community projects across the country. (The future of grants at the arts endowment remains unclear.)

The moves have stirred a broad outcry among humanities advocates, who warn that they could undermine state and local programming for the nation’s 250th anniversary. It has also prompted fears that some state humanities councils, particularly in rural states without a significant private philanthropic base, would be forced to shut down entirely.

Shortly before Thursday’s announcement about the Garden of American Heroes, the National Endowment for the Humanities issued a separate update on its funding priorities, saying it seeks to “return to being a responsible steward of taxpayer funds.” All future awards, it said, will be “merit-based, awarded to projects that do not promote extreme ideologies based upon race or gender, and that help to instill an understanding of the founding principles and ideals that make America an exceptional country.”

In another embrace of traditional symbolism, the agency has changed its logo. Instead of a sunburst design from recent years, it reverted to one derived from the Great Seal of the United States, showing an eagle clutching an olive branch and a bundle of arrows.

The Full List of 'American Heroes'

Ansel Adams, John Adams, Samuel Adams, Muhammad Ali, Luis Walter Alvarez, Susan B. Anthony, Hannah Arendt, Louis Armstrong, Neil Armstrong, Crispus Attucks, John James Audubon, Lauren Bacall, Clara Barton, Todd Beamer, Alexander Graham Bell, Roy Benavidez, Ingrid Bergman, Irving Berlin, Humphrey Bogart, Daniel Boone, Norman Borlaug, William Bradford, Herb Brooks, Kobe Bryant, William F. Buckley Jr., Sitting Bull, Frank Capra, Andrew Carnegie, Charles Carroll, John Carroll, George Washington Carver, Johnny Cash, Joshua Chamberlain, Whittaker Chambers, Johnny "Appleseed" Chapman, Ray Charles, Julia Child, Gordon Chung-Hoon, William Clark, Henry Clay, Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain), Roberto Clemente, Grover Cleveland, Red Cloud, William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody, Nat King Cole, Samuel Colt, Christopher Columbus, Calvin Coolidge, James Fenimore Cooper, Davy Crockett, Benjamin O. Davis Jr., Miles Davis, Dorothy Day, Joseph H. De Castro, Emily Dickinson, Walt Disney, William "Wild Bill" Donovan, Jimmy Doolittle, Desmond Doss, Frederick Douglass, Herbert Henry Dow, Katharine Drexel, Peter Drucker, Amelia Earhart, Thomas Edison, Jonathan Edwards, Albert Einstein, Dwight D. Eisenhower, Duke Ellington, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Medgar Evers, David Farragut, the Marquis de La Fayette, Mary Fields, Henry Ford, George Fox, Aretha Franklin, Benjamin Franklin, Milton Friedman, Robert Frost, Gabby Gabreski, Bernardo de Gálvez, Lou Gehrig, Theodor Seuss Geisel, Cass Gilbert, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, John Glenn, Barry Goldwater, Samuel Gompers, Alexander Goode, Carl Gorman, Billy Graham, Ulysses S. Grant, Nellie Gray, Nathanael Greene, Woody Guthrie, Nathan Hale, William Frederick "Bull" Halsey Jr., Alexander Hamilton, Ira Hayes, Hans Christian Heg, Ernest Hemingway, Patrick Henry, Charlton Heston, Alfred Hitchcock, Billie Holiday, Bob Hope, Johns Hopkins, Grace Hopper, Sam Houston, Whitney Houston, Julia Ward Howe, Edwin Hubble, Daniel Inouye, Andrew Jackson, Robert H. Jackson, Mary Jackson, John Jay, Thomas Jefferson, Steve Jobs, Katherine Johnson, Barbara Jordan, Chief Joseph, Elia Kazan, Helen Keller, John F. Kennedy, Francis Scott Key, Coretta Scott King, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Russell Kirk, Jeane Kirkpatrick, Henry Knox, Tadeusz Kosciuszko, Harper Lee, Pierre Charles L'Enfant, Meriwether Lewis, Abraham Lincoln, Vince Lombardi, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Clare Boothe Luce, Douglas MacArthur, Dolley Madison, James Madison, George Marshall, Thurgood Marshall, William Mayo, Christa McAuliffe, William McKinley, Louise McManus, Herman Melville, Thomas Merton, George P. Mitchell, Maria Mitchell, William "Billy" Mitchell, Samuel Morse, Lucretia Mott, John Muir, Audie Murphy, Edward Murrow, John Neumann, Annie Oakley, Jesse Owens, Rosa Parks, George S. Patton, Jr., Charles Willson Peale, William Penn, Oliver Hazard Perry, John J. Pershing, Edgar Allan Poe, Clark Poling, John Russell Pope, Elvis Presley, Jeannette Rankin, Ronald Reagan, Walter Reed, William Rehnquist, Paul Revere, Henry Hobson Richardson, Hyman Rickover,

Sally Ride, Matthew Ridgway, Jackie Robinson, Norman Rockwell, Caesar Rodney, Eleanor Roosevelt, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Theodore Roosevelt, Betsy Ross, Babe Ruth, Sacagawea, Jonas Salk, John Singer Sargent, Antonin Scalia, Norman Schwarzkopf, Junípero Serra, Elizabeth Ann Seton, Robert Gould Shaw, Fulton Sheen, Alan Shepard, Frank Sinatra, Margaret Chase Smith, Bessie Smith, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Jimmy Stewart, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Gilbert Stuart, Anne Sullivan, William Howard Taft, Maria Tallchief, Maxwell Taylor, Tecumseh, Kateri Tekakwitha, Shirley Temple, Nikola Tesla, Jefferson Thomas, Henry David Thoreau, Jim Thorpe, Augustus Tolton, Alex Trebek, Harry S. Truman, Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, Dorothy Vaughan, C. T. Vivian, John von Neumann, Thomas Ustick Walter, Sam Walton, Booker T. Washington, George Washington, John Washington, John Wayne, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Phillis Wheatley, Walt Whitman, Laura Ingalls Wilder, Roger Williams, John Winthrop, Frank Lloyd Wright, Orville Wright, Wilbur Wright, Alvin C. York, Cy Young, and Lorenzo de Zavala.

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