

Federal Judge Halts Administration's Cut to Humanities Grants

August 7, 2025

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A federal judge in Oregon has temporarily blocked the administration's attempt to cancel humanities grants awarded through the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), citing concerns over constitutional overreach. The ruling safeguards funding for state and regional humanities councils, at least for now.

Judge Michael H. Simon issued the injunction in response to a lawsuit filed by several humanities organizations, including Oregon Humanities and the Federation of State Humanities Councils. They argued that the administration acted unlawfully by rescinding congressionally approved grants. The court agreed that the executive branch may have exceeded its authority by attempting to override appropriations already approved by Congress.

The plaintiffs claim that the canceled funding jeopardized local programming and educational initiatives nationwide. They also warned that many community projects would be forced to shut down without immediate relief. The judge found their arguments persuasive and concluded that the grant withdrawals could cause “irreparable harm.”

Adam Davis, executive director of Oregon Humanities, welcomed the decision and emphasized its significance for civic life and cultural development. “This is about more than funding,” he said. “It is about ensuring that the humanities remain accessible to communities across the country.”

The temporary injunction prevents any changes to the grant status until the court resolves the broader constitutional dispute. The case highlights ongoing tension between the legislative and executive branches over control of federal funding, particularly in politically sensitive sectors like arts, culture, and education.

For now, the ruling protects the grants, but the legal battle underscores the fragility of such funding under shifting political priorities.