

A Note from the Editors and JFE Volunteer Editorial Board

The views expressed are only our own.

Since our first issue in 2014, the National Endowment for the Arts funding has been central to supporting JFE as a critical anchor for Local Learning’s services to the field. Early in 2025 we observed that the new administration rebuked prior precedents, and suddenly nothing surrounding federal funding was certain. Thus, we immediately began scenario planning. Committed to this open-access resource that offers free high-quality resources for educators around the nation, we turned to our network and raised just over \$2,500. Although not a sustainable amount, it was enough to begin the publication process for this special issue on the art of documentation, “Cultural Frameworks for Transformative Documenting and Learning.”

On May 2, 2025, we learned that our NEA recommendation for funding had been withdrawn. We appealed, renewed our fundraising energy, and invested even more deeply in the issue. Folklife methodology, content, and worldview matter more than ever to counter the dismantling of public-serving institutions.

August 1, 2025, we received a note from NEA that our appeal was successful, reversing the decision to withdraw funding. As of publication, however, we have not received an award agreement or access to the funds.

We document our year to recognize, with urgency, the importance of this publication that has no paywall and advances the work of folk arts education. We thank each reader who donated to support this issue, which would not have happened without you. We thank current and past NEA staff for their commitment to projects for the public good. Finally, as we consider what is at stake, we also highlight the many organizations dedicated to accessible arts and learning in the nation, supported by the people of this nation. We hope that amplifying why this funding matters will help support a future that includes robust funding for arts, education, and work that matters.