

Dear NCGE members and geography education stakeholders,

It is a pleasure to present to you with this report on the National Council for Geographic Education's accomplishments and activities for 2025. NCGE is a membership organization, and the information presented here represents a return on the investment made by each and every member, donor, and partner who has been involved with the Council. The report is a marker along a path toward increased organizational impact and sustainability. Around our organization, 2025 was often chaotic and unsettling, and we needed to adjust to new realities and new concerns in the most productive way possible. For our organization, however, the year was about getting stronger internally. We navigated through a leadership change in the first quarter of the year, but we kept moving forward and ended the year strong. There are reasons to celebrate, and also an ongoing need for strategic action and resolve.

The report focuses on six areas:

1. **Leadership:** A new Executive Director joined in March and participation in our Board of Directors continues to grow, with 13 members (4 new) active in 2025. As we strengthen governance and support Board leadership, we implemented a new Board Member Agreement and Code of Conduct; Fundraising and Investment Policies; and evaluation reporting.
2. **Membership:** Overall membership grew by 7% during the year. A total of 1,528 individuals had memberships active during 2025.
3. **Programs:** We continued to sustain support for research and professional learning through our two successful journals, webinars, APHG Bellringers, travel program, and other activities. Our annual conference in Omaha was our biggest conference since the pandemic, with wonderful support from the Geographic Educators of Nebraska and co-location of an AAG Regional Division Meeting facilitated by Dr. Christina Dando at University of Nebraska-Omaha.
4. **Communications:** We communicated curated information and useful resources to an audience of over 13,000 on a weekly basis. Our website was refreshed, and we rejuvenated our activities on Facebook and LinkedIn.
5. **Partnerships:** Productive discussions and collaborations have increased with all members of GENIP, and we are pleased to see more coordination across these organizations. The NCGE Partner Network continued to connect and support state and local level organizations and elevate the great work being done by many state alliances that continue to thrive.
6. **Finances and Fundraising:** The foundational challenge for NCGE is sustainability, and this year marked a much-needed turnaround in our financial fortunes. Despite challenges in meeting targets for conference and journal revenues, we managed to end the year with a surplus and increase our total assets for the first time in nine years. Esteemed members of the NCGE community have stepped forward to create the Leadership Circle Endowment as a key strategy for achieving long-term sustainability.

We are always open to hearing feedback, so let us know what you think of the report.

In service and solidarity,
The NCGE team



**4 new
Directors
joining the
Board**

Membership

7%

**Conference
attendance
highest
since 2019**

**Leadership
Circle
Endowment
created**

Jump to Report Section

**LEADERSHIP
MEMBERSHIP
PROGRAMS
COMMUNICATIONS
PARTNERSHIPS
FINANCES & FUNDRAISING**

NCGE Leadership

Board of Directors for 2025

President:	Phillip Hare
President-Elect:	Celeste Reynolds
Past President:	Thomas Larsen
Secretary:	Michael Mewborne
Treasurer:	Thomas Herman/Kevin Luss
Directors:	Samantha Serrano (term ending) Heather Moll John "Scott" Greene Tracy Edwards Kyle Tredinnick Jonathan Wessell Sojung Huh Mayra Román-Rivera

Staff

Executive Director: Thomas Herman (as of March 1, 2025), tom@ncge.org

Program Director: Lisa Marie Tobin, lisamarie@ncge.org

Professional Development and Resource Coordinator: Julie Wakefield, julie@ncge.org

Bookkeeper: Charlene Melvin

Editor, *Journal of Geography*: Injeong Jo

Editor, *The Geography Teacher*: Gregory Chu

APHG Bellringer author: Laura Kmetz



Thank you for your service, Thomas Larsen!

Thomas rotated off the Board at the end of 2025 after 5 years of service. But don't worry, he's a lifetime member, so he's sticking around.

Membership

As a membership organization, the size and distribution of our membership are key measures of organizational health.

Active members

There were 1,186 members active as of December 2025. This is a 7% increase over the prior year.

- Lifetime, annual, and student memberships were all up, while retired memberships were down slightly.
- High school teachers make up the majority of NCGE members, and virtually all of those individuals teach AP Human Geography.

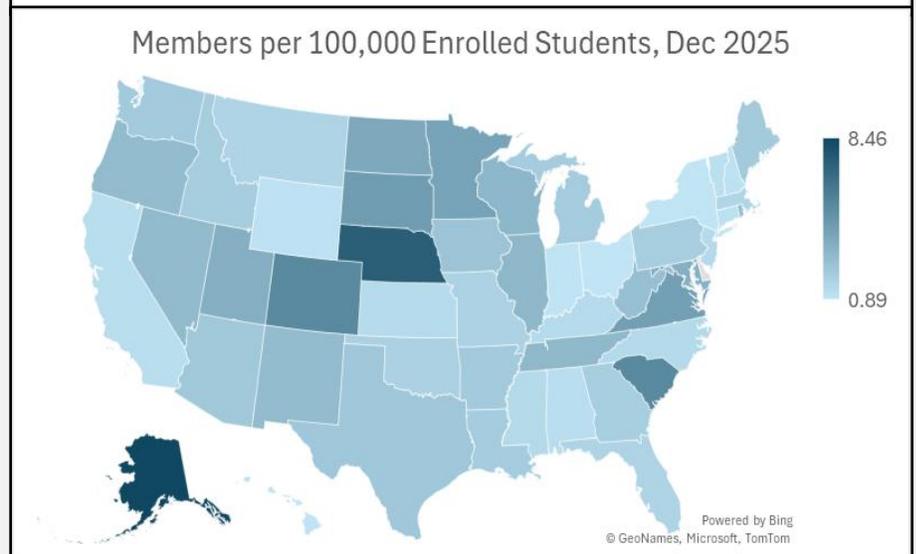
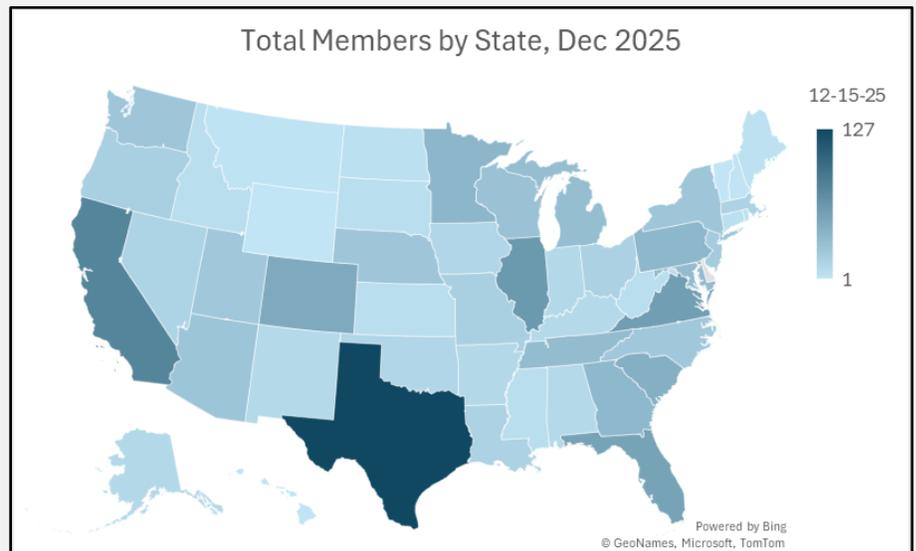
Member distribution

- There are members from all 50 states as well as DC, Puerto Rico, American Samoa, overseas military bases, and multiple countries. The three states with the highest number of members are TX (127), CA (78), IL (62), VA (58), and FL (54).
- The ten states with the highest rates of participation are AK, NE, SC, CO, SD, VA, MN, DE, ND, UT.

+ 7%

Membership growth in 2025

Elementary	3.8%
Middle	10.0%
Junior High	13.6%
Senior High	53.3%
APHG	50.9%
Junior/Comm. Coll.	5.8%
4-Year College/Univ.	17.2%
Not specified	7.6%



Programs

Annual Conference

The 2025 annual conference took place at the Doubletree Hotel in Omaha, Nebraska on October 17-19. The conference organizing was very well supported by the local organizing committee and the Geographic Educators of Nebraska (GEON), and Omaha made an excellent host city for geography educators.

The annual conference had 208 registered participants from throughout the United States, a slight increase in participation over 2024. There were more than 60 workshops and sessions plus 6 exhibitors. Outstanding walking and bus-facilitated field excursions were coordinated by Harris Payne with financial support from Lozier. Esri, our major conference sponsor, hosted a drop-in GIS learning lab all day on Saturday. Exhibitor iScore5 provided a fun and challenging evening of trivia at the Saturday evening reception. And the members meeting on Sunday, featuring a full breakfast, was sponsored by the South Carolina Geographic Alliance.

NCGE was able to work with University of Nebraska Omaha Professors Christina Dando and Rex Cammack to facilitate the co-location of the AAG Great Plains/Rocky Mountains Regional Division Meeting. The 78 registrants for the AAG Regional Division meeting were all present during joint general sessions on Friday and Saturday, and the full program of both conferences was available to all participants.

Before the official start of the conference, while some were off exploring the city, 30 members of the NCGE Partners Network came together to talk about collaborative strategies to advance the cause of geography education. A lightning round for sharing and three rounds of breakout discussions made it possible to cover a lot of information and identify some ideas for future action in relation to professional learning and educational resources, research that advances geography education, and communication and advocacy.



Photo: NCGE Program Director Lisa Marie Tobin leads a breakout discussion during the Partners Network Workshop.

The joint opening session was a special occasion. It started with a warm welcome by Mayor John Ewing (photo at right, top). NCGE President Phillip Hare welcomed AAG President Bill Moseley to the stage to deliver a presidential address on building a thriving discipline. Both GEON and NCGE then presented awards for outstanding professional achievements in geography education. Larianne Collins received the President's Award. Faith Engel



Photos: Omaha Mayor John Ewing addresses the crowd during the opening session of the conference (top). Winners of NCGE awards pose after being honored for their excellent work (middle). Dr. Jessica DiCarlo delivers the conference keynote (bottom).

(McCloud Junior HS, OK), Stephen Jacobson (Sturgeon Bay SD, WI), and Chris Turley (Lincoln Public Schools, NE) received the K-12 Distinguished Teaching Award. Justin McCracken (Jenks HS, OK) won the AP Human Geography Teaching Award. Kelly León (Univ. of Wisc.-Green Bay) received the E. Willard and Ruby S. Miller Geography Education Research Grant. The Salvatore J. Natoli Dissertation Award was awarded to Lisa D. Elikan for her work on non-formal education at Texas State University. Articles of the year were announced for both *The Geography Teacher* and the *Journal of Geography*. And nominator and Past President Ken Keller presented the George J. Miller Award for Distinguished Service to Paul Gray.

Dr. Jessica DiCarlo of the University of Utah (photo, left) gave an outstanding keynote talk to a packed ballroom as part of Saturday’s lunch program. She provided insights into her journey as a learner and intrepid traveler into a career as a professional geographer. Dr. DiCarlo’s participation was generously supported by the National Consortium for Teaching about Asia (NCTA).

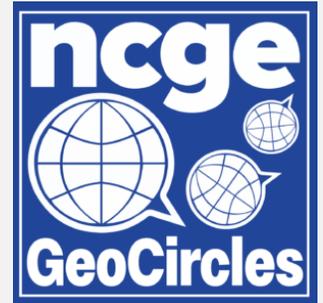
The conference finished strong on Sunday. Those who came for breakfast learned the outcome of the Board election and heard a presentation by Dr. Brian Griffiths of Georgetown University. Dr. Griffiths is NCGE’s Miller Research Grant recipient for 2024 who made contact with the organization while fieldwork in the Peruvian Amazon. He shared vivid stories and lots of interesting video content to help us understand his work studying biodiversity in

remote reaches of the Amazon basin by collaborating with indigenous hunters. Finally, Executive Director Tom Herman reported on the State of the Council and shared some information about the strategic direction, financial health, and immediate goals for NCGE in 2026.

Webinars and GeoCircles

Supporting the professional learning of teachers is a major part of the work of the Council. During the year, we were actively working on developing our webinar program and will continue to refine strategies, engage new partners, and increase promotion.

- We offered 18 individual webinars, with College Board, the Institute for Middle East Studies, and state alliances among contributing partners.
- A total of 194 participants attending one or more live webinar. Many more members access content on-demand, and the recorded collection of webinars generated 1,249 impressions.
- An offshoot of the webinar program, GeoCircles facilitated 9 conversations about a range of topics. The 2025 series had 66 participants.



APHG Toolkit, Bellringers, and Test Prep Support

More than half of NCGE's members teach AP Human Geography, and supporting them is a top priority for the Council. NCGE has developed an APHG Toolkit and distributed 32 new weekly Bellringers skillfully written by Laura Kmetz. Members also have access to an archive containing bellringers from prior years. In the Spring, a webinar on "Tips and Tricks to Prepare Students for the AP Exam" was open access.

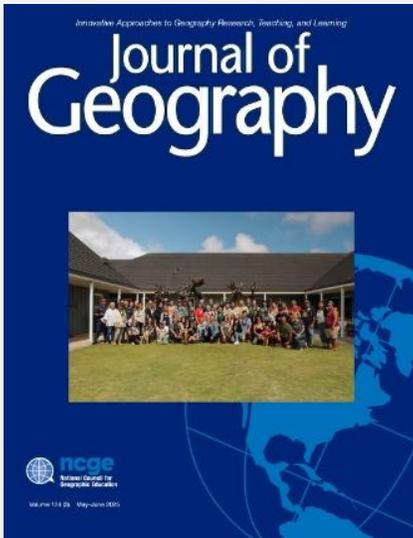
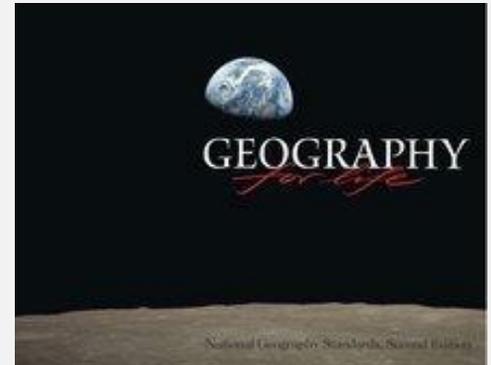
Around the World Program

NCGE has been organizing and offering travel learning experiences for teachers for decades. The program is built on a basic principle that unique travel experiences are powerful opportunities for educators to both learn about the world and learn to apply a geographic lens to better understand the interconnections and interdependencies shaping that world. Three trips were offered for 2025 – to Iceland, the Peruvian Amazon, and Morocco. Interest in the trips, however, was historically low. This may be impacted by uncertainty in the economy or geopolitics, or by changes in the way educators want to travel or spend their summer vacation time, but the result was that we needed to adjust on the fly to this new reality. The longstanding Iceland trip was cancelled and discontinued. Our planned trip to Morocco also did not meet minimum enrollment and was cancelled, but our new travel partner GEEO was able to rebook our registered participants on another trip with a very similar itinerary, and we are grateful for GEEO's flexibility. One bright spot was that seven educators were able to participate in the Peruvian Amazon trip this year and are already busy converting their travel experiences to classroom lessons.

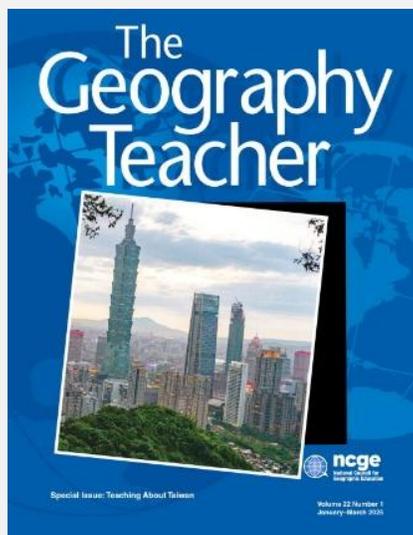
Around the World trips for Summer 2026 are planned for Morocco and the Peruvian Amazon. In addition, a Revolutionary Crossroads trip will span crucial sites in the Upper Hudson and Mohawk Valleys of New York. This is a one-time opportunity led by a group of expert geographers, historians, and educators.

Publications

Publications have always been an important vehicle for advancing geographic education and geography education research. NCGE holds copyrights to important resource publications, including *Geography for Life, 2nd Edition*. Website visitors downloaded e-copies of that document 261 times.



The *Journal of Geography* published six issues of its 124th volume in 2025 under the direction of Editor Injeong Jo. The volume included 36 works, and while complete metrics are not available yet for that volume, publisher Taylor and Francis reports 65,000 downloads/views annually. *JoG* maintains a prominent role as the leading journal addressing primary through college level geography education research and practice in the United States. Its impact factor was 1.86 for 2024, which is comparable to *The Professional Geographer* and *The Journal of Educational Research*, two other journals published by Taylor and Francis.



The Geography Teacher published 32 papers in four issues of its 22nd volume in 2025, under the leadership of Editor Gregory Chu. The journal has experienced continuous growth in the past several years, with 2025's Q3 downloads, for example, up 12% from 2024 and 67% higher than in 2022. Taylor and Francis reports 23,000 downloads/views annually and a CiteScore of 0.9 for 2024.

Communications

E-mails

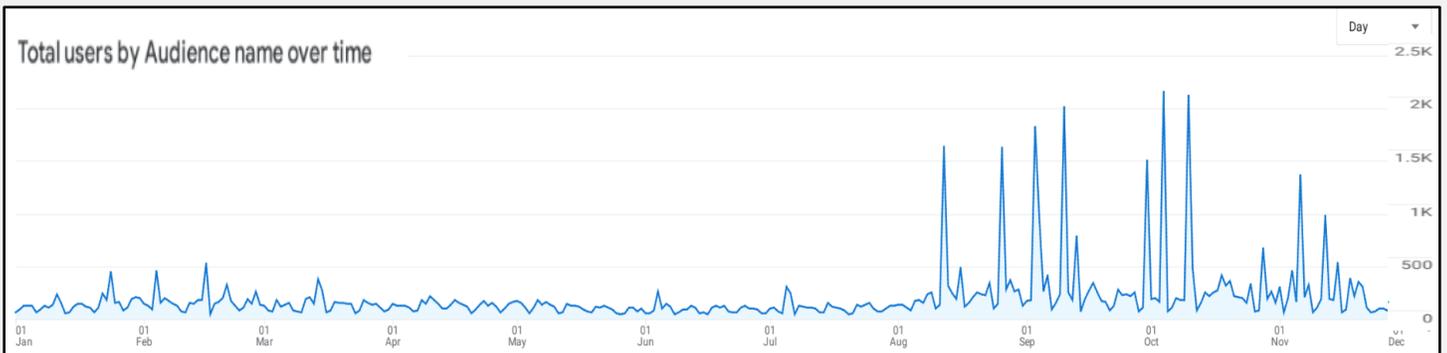
Email messages go out weekly to keep members apprised of available resources and opportunities to extend their professional learning. Emails are carefully curated to present useful information in a concise format. The email distribution list also includes inactive members and non-members that have participated in NCGE programs.

- There are 13,198 email contacts on our distribution list.
- We sent 63 member and resource e-news communications in 2025.
- The open rate (48%) and click rate (4%) for our mass emails are higher than industry standard. They generate positive feedback from members.

Website

[NCGE.org](https://www.ncge.org) is the primary means for organizing and sharing information about the organization. The website underwent a back-end refresh in 2025 to keep it functionally up-to-date, and staff continue to revise and refine the information that is provided on the site. Members visit the site to access resources, learn about and engage in programs, and link to journals, while the larger group of users comes to access free resources and find out more about the organization.

- The website had 37,181 users over the first 11 months of 2025, with over 36,000 of those being new users.
- Daily visits to the website (seen in graph below) stayed in the range of 50-500 from January – July, but spiked above 1,000 per day several times in August – November.

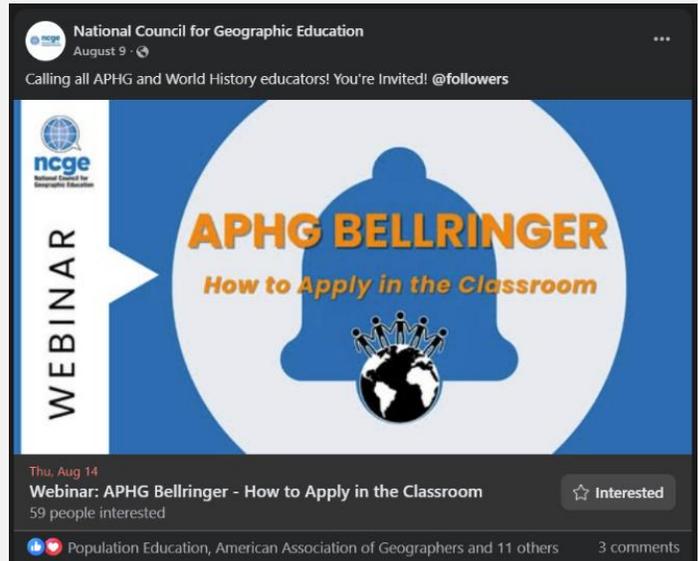
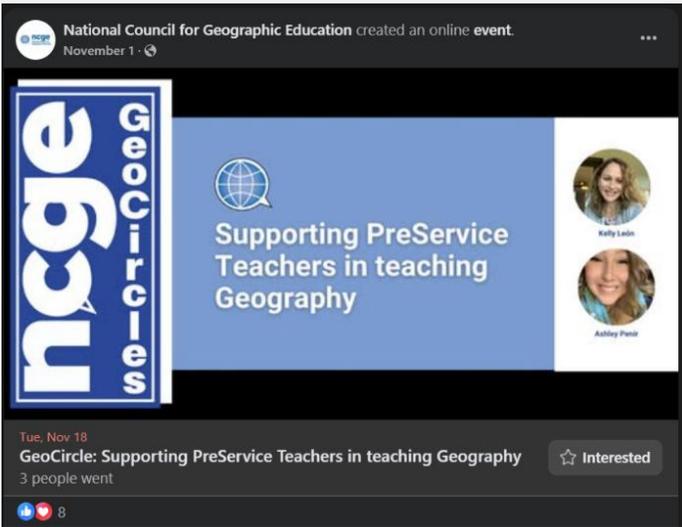


Social media

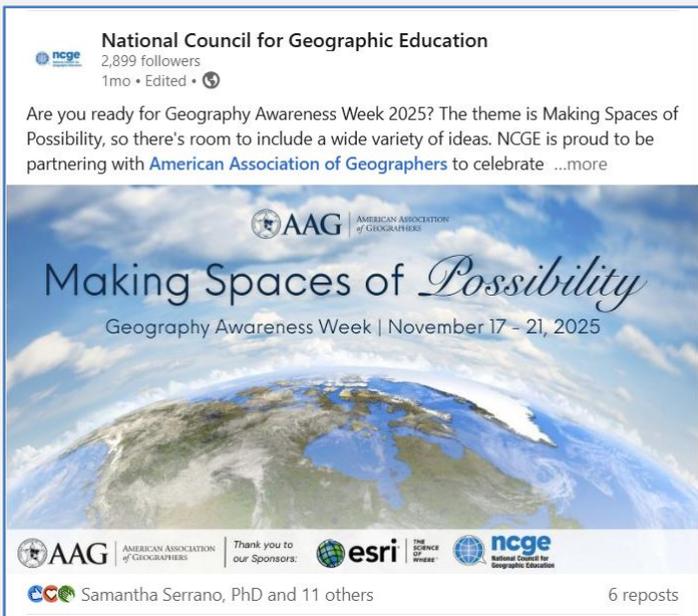
NCGE is using social media to raise the organization’s visibility to non-members and increase engagement among members. Currently, staff maintains organizational accounts on Facebook and LinkedIn.

- NCGE’s company page on Facebook currently has 2,800 followers. Follow us at <https://www.facebook.com/NCGE1915>.





- NCGE has a LinkedIn company page with 2,899 followers. There is also a group dating back to 2010 with 2,986 members. The company page and a group were reactivated in Summer 2025 after several years of dormancy. Twenty (20) posts were created from September – December, with the most popular generating 1,220 impressions and 40 clicks.



Partnerships

NCGE magnifies its impacts through partnerships and collaborations with organizations operating at international, national, and state/local scales. During 2025, efforts were made to both strengthen and focus partnerships at every level. NCGE serves as fiscal sponsor for the Geography Education National Implementation Project (GENIP) and has been working to engage existing and new partners in renewing and refocusing our partnership commitments. As part of this work, NCGE has secured a commitment of \$46,000 in GENIP support for a publication project that will help NCGE provide more support to teacher preparation programs.



Esri and its Education Program have been a powerful force in geography education over the last couple of decades, and Esri has been a great partner to NCGE as well. In 2025, Esri continued its role as a Corporate Sponsor, which included being the presenting sponsor at the annual conference and a partner in providing professional learning opportunities to our members through our webinar program.



The American Association of Geographers has worked in parallel with NCGE since our founding in 1915. The partnership between the organizations was refreshed in 2025 – with a new commitment to promoting Geography Awareness Week and coordinating an Education Summit at AAG’s Annual Conference. AAG President William Moseley has launched an initiative to better link high school learning opportunities with undergraduate studies in geography, and this is another area of collaboration.



The American Geographical Society is another organization that has been a supportive partner of NCGE since its inception. In re-establishing direct communications, the two organizations have found ways to engage in cross-promotion and leverage the unique assets of each organization to maximize support for teachers, especially those who teach AP Human Geography.

NCGE created its Partner Network to maintain connection and facilitate collaboration between state alliances and other partners working. These organizations play a key role in advancing programs of the Council. For example, the Geographic Educators of Nebraska played a huge role in making the Omaha conference a success as local host, the South Carolina Geographic Alliance was a conference sponsor, and Virginia Geographic Alliance stepped up to offer a unique field experience for America250 to offer as part of our Around the World professional learning program in 2026.

A Partners Workshop at the annual conference was used to assess needs and opportunities and move toward a common agenda for collective action. Information on partners was updated on the NCGE website, and Partner Highlights will be a recurring feature of NCGE’s email communications.

Finances and Fundraising

Revenues and Expenses

NCGE ended 2025 with a budget surplus for the first time in nine years.

Total revenues for 2025 were \$307,710, an 11% increase over the prior year. Membership dues (25%), journal royalties (25%), conference registration fees (19%), and donations (16%) were the main sources of revenue. Both journal royalties and conference registrations were one-third below projected levels, creating a gap of about \$65,000 in the annual budget. On the other hand, membership dues exceeded budget expectations, and renewed fundraising efforts generated \$59,000 in total donations (up \$46,000 from 2024).

Expenses for 2025 were \$298,252, down more than 20% from the prior year. Staffing contracts (51%) and annual conference costs (34%) represent the largest components of the Council's expenses.

Fundraising

- **The Leadership Circle Endowment** was launched at the Annual Conference to encourage planned gifts and large cash donations to establish a new endowment fund to increase the long-term sustainability of NCGE. This effort generated \$47,500 in donations to establish this important new foundation for the future.

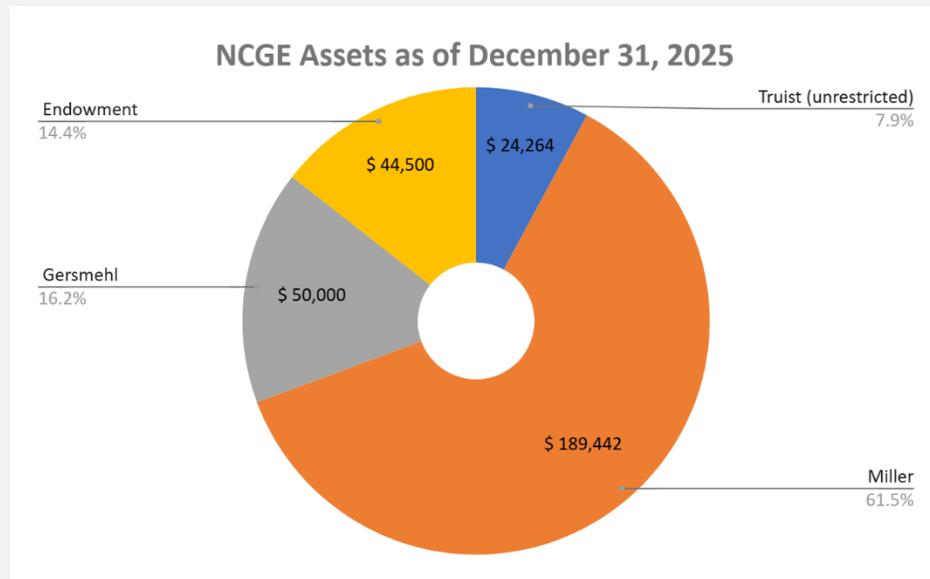
The Leadership Circle will recognize individuals who have donated \$2,500 or more or who have included NCGE in their estate or retirement account plan and notified NCGE of the arrangement. The opportunity to become a founding member of the Leadership Circle will be extended through 2026. For anyone who is interested in leaving a legacy through a planned gift, Certified Financial Planner Kevin Luss is available to provide pro-bono assistance in exploring a range of mechanisms to find the best option for you.

The founding members of the Leadership Circle, to date, are (listed alphabetically):

- Sarah and Bob Bednarz
 - Charlie Fitzpatrick
 - Barbara Fredrich
 - Barbara Hildebrandt
 - Susan Hume
 - Jerry Mitchell
 - Bob Morrill
 - Jody Smothers-Marcello
- **In total, 18 donors contributed a total of \$57,995, an increase of over 250%** from 2024. In addition to the contributors listed above, individuals who donated \$200 or more in 2025 include (listed alphabetically):
 - Dr. and Mrs. Dominic J. Allocco (Allocco Family Charitable Trust)
 - Thomas J. Baerwald
 - Stanley D. Brunn
 - Jeffrey Ellis-Lee
 - James Hantula
 - Thomas Herman
 - Kevin Luss
 - Samantha Serrano

Assets

- NCGE's total assets at year end were \$308,207, which is up 13% year-over-year.
- Investment funds (currently with Wells Fargo Advisors) continued to generate good returns in 2025 (~13%), providing much needed funds for the organization.
- The newly established Leadership Circle Endowment Fund will be a source of long-term asset growth.
- Cash flow continues to be a struggle. With less than 8% of assets available as unrestricted cash (below two months of operating costs), this will continue to be an area of focus.



You can support NCGE and the future of geography education by making a contribution of any size today or by exploring legacy giving opportunities.

**DONATE NOW
AT NCGE.ORG**

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