Disclaimer: The following slides were used to supplement a public oral presentation for potential NEH applicants. They are not intended to provide complete information about the NEH's programs and they do not constitute an official statement of NEH policy. For current information about NEH programs, including eligibility requirements and the dates of deadlines, please consult the guidelines posted on the NEH website at neh.gov.

MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY MARCH 3, 2022

NEH 101: opportunities and resources

Daniel Sack, Division of Education Programs

Thanks for the invitation to be with you all here today. I visited MSU about four years ago. I still have a cowbell in my office. I'll spend a little time today briefly describing the NEH and highlighting some grant programs that y'all might find particularly interesting. There will be plenty of time for questions.

All you need to know

- NEH programs are competitive, but you won't get a grant if you won't apply
- Read the application guidelines
- Talk to NEH program officers

Here's my key message, boiled down: 1) NEH programs are competitive, but you won't get a grant if you won't apply. 2) Read the application guidelines—that will help you write a better application. 3) Talk to NEH program officers—that's why we're there. Write us or call us--we will reply and we will help.

NEH staff

—NEH

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

Since the Endowment is a federal agency, you may assume that the staff are all federal bureaucrats. Well, we are, but Endowment staff are scholars, many with faculty experience and research records. We see our job as supporting public and scholarly engagement with the humanities, and we do it because we believe in the humanities and in scholarship. If you take away nothing else today, know that, unlike some foundations, NEH staff are happy to talk to you by phone or email. We want to be your allies.

A word or two about myself. A historian of American religion, with a degree in religious studies. Variety of teaching and administration before coming to the NEH almost twelve years ago.

What are the Humanities?

History

Literature and language

History and theory of the arts

Philosophy and ethics

Archaeology

Comparative religion

Jurisprudence

Social sciences employing humanistic methods

This may seem fairly obvious, the Endowment's work focuses on the humanities. We don't support the creative arts—that's the NEA. We don't support humanitarian work. We work with a capacious definition of the humanities. Here's the definition laid out in our founding legislation. There is some room here, for instance, for the social sciences as long as they are pursuing humanistic work through humanistic methods. Sometimes our evaluators do find themselves wrestling with whether a particular project really is in the humanities.

What's new?

- Archeological & Ethnographic Field Research
- Expanded outreach
- Live and pre-recorded webinars for every program

Your research office asked me to highlight what is new at the NEH. We have a fairly new program in our Division of Research Programs, called Archeological & Ethnographic Field Research. I'll tell you a bit about that in a moment. Our new agency leadership is encouraging us to broaden our outreach, with particular interest in reaching communities and institutions who don't usually apply to the NEH. As part of that work, NEH staff now offer live and recorded webinars for every grant program, every year. Those webinars tell you about a project's goals and eligibility, and offer suggestions on how to write a good application. You can find those webinars on every program information page. We hope to broaden our library of webinars to help more prospective applicants.

Who does your project serve?

THE GENERAL PUBLIC (museum visitors, TV watchers)? Public Programs
RESEARCHERS AND LIBRARY USERS? Preservation and Access
TEACHERS AND STUDENTS? Education Programs
SCHOLARS AND GENERAL READERS? Research Programs
DIGITAL HUMANISTS? Digital Humanities
INSTITUTIONS? Challenge Programs

We have 38 grant programs, so you might feel a bit overwhelmed, when trying to find the right program for your project. Here's a hint. The NEH is organized by the audiences for grant products. Each of our divisions targets different groups, so you should think about the audience for your work, and then look at grants from the appropriate division. If your project is serving the general public, like museum visitors or people watching documentaries, you should look towards to the Division of Public Programs. If your project is aimed at researchers and library users, your grants are probably in the Division of Preservation and Access. If your project is classroom focused, look at the Division of Education Programs. If you are doing research and writing, for scholars or general readers, those grants are in the Division of Research Programs. If you are creating new digital technologies, look at the Office of Digital Humanities. And if your organization is doing major fund-raising, turn to the Office of

Challenge Programs.

DIVISION OF RESEARCH PROGRAMS

Supports scholars—individuals and collaborative teams—working on research projects that advance knowledge and understanding of the humanities.

I'll start with the Division of Research Programs, because it may be of most interest to you all. The division supports the work of scholars, working individually or in teams, doing research for scholarly and general audiences.

Division of Research Programs

WHAT WE FUND

Activities	Print and Digital Products
Travel to archives	Articles
Research	Monographs
Scholarly editing	Multi-authored volumes
Collaboration	Archaeological site reports
Writing	Translations
Convening	Editions
	Other interpretive tools

Division grant programs support the work that most scholars do—research and writing to produce books or other materials that will have an impact on the scholarship in their field. All of these projects have to be based on original research and have some kind of interpretive approach. They need to make an argument or contribute to scholarly discussion. The work can result in a variety of different kinds of products.

Division of Research Programs

GRANT OFFERINGS

Grants for Individuals
Fellowships
Awards for Faculty
Summer Stipends
Public Scholars
NEH-Mellon Fellowships
DEL-Fellowships

**Grants for Institutions**
Collaborative Research
Scholarly Editions &
      Translations
Fellowship Programs at
      Independent Research
      Institutions
Archeological and
      Ethnographic Field
      Research

The division offers eleven programs, split into two families. Some of our programs are designed for individual scholars, the only ones awarded by the Endowment, which obviously support the work of an individual scholar. Others are institutional grants which are for groups of scholars who are doing bigger projects.

Division of Research Programs

FELLOWSHIPS
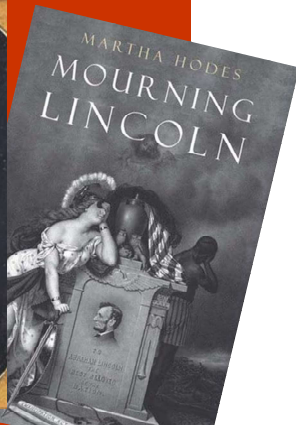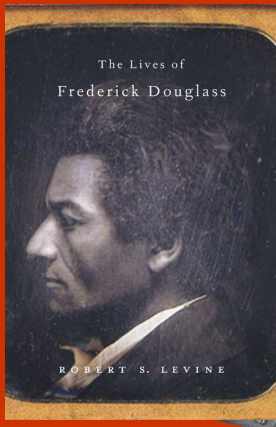
Supports individual scholars pursuing projects that embody exceptional research, rigorous analysis, and clear writing.

Awards are made for periods from 6 to 12 months.

Awards are $5,000/month. The minimum award is $30,000; the maximum is $60,000.

Award periods must be continuous and full-time.

Deadline: April

The division's programs include the Fellowship, probably the best-known of the Endowment's grant programs—this is what people are talking about when they say "Oh, that person got an NEH!" The fellowship is available for 6-12 months. The award is $5,000/month, or a maximum award of $60,000. The deadline is in mid-April for the following year.

**Division of
Research Programs**

NEH-MELLON FELLOWSHIPS FOR DIGITAL PUBLICATION

Supports high-quality "born digital" research and publication in the humanities.

Awards are made for periods from 6 to 12 months.

Awards are $5,000/month. The minimum award is $30,000; the maximum is $60,000.

Award periods must be continuous and full-time.

Deadline: April

The NEH-Mellon Digital fellowships support the creation of projects that are designed specifically for digital publication.

**Division of
Research Programs**

**SUMMER
STIPENDS**

The Wisdom
of Frugality

Why Less Is More—More or Less

EMRYS WESTACOTT
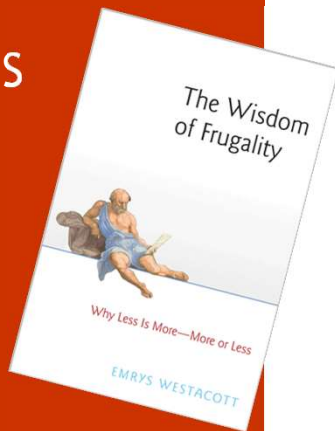
**Supports continuous full-time work
on a humanities project for a period
of two consecutive months.**

Awards are $6,000.

Award periods must be continuous
and full-time.

NEH funds may support recipients'
compensation, travel, and other costs
related to the proposed scholarly
research.

Deadline: September

Tenured and tenure-track faculty
must be nominated.

Our summer stipend program provides two month of
support for the same kind of work. The deadline is in late
September for the following summer. Tenured and tenure-
track faculty must be nominated to apply for this program,
and institutions can only nominate two people per year.
Non tenure track people do not need to be nominated. The
only limited submission program at NEH.

**Division of
Research Programs**

PUBLIC SCHOLAR
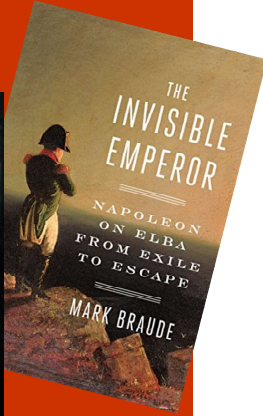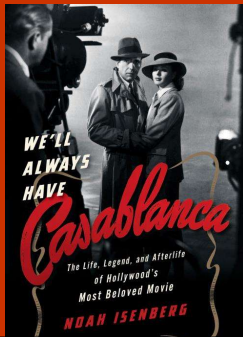
Supports well-researched books in the humanities intended to reach a broad readership.

Awards are made for periods from 6 to 12 months.

Awards are $5,000/month. The minimum award is $30,000; the maximum is $60,000.

Award periods must be continuous, with some combination of full- and part-time.

Deadline: December

Our Public Scholar program supports books on humanities themes targeted at a general readership. Applicants must have a track record of writing for a broad audience and be prepared to engage a variety of publics with their work. Like the fellowship, this program is good for six to twelve months. This is a December deadline.

Division of Research Programs

ARCHEOLOGICAL & ETHNOGRAPHIC FIELD RESEARCH

Support for projects conducting empirical field research to answer significant questions in the humanities.

For individuals or teams of scholars

Awards are made for one to three years for a maximum of $150,000.

Deadline: September

Archeological and Ethnographic Field Research is a new program, for an individual scholar or a team of scholars doing some kind of field research. The method may be social scientific, but the fundamental questions must be humanistic. The deadline is September.

Division of Research Programs

COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH

CIVIL WAR WASHINGTON

Civil War Washington examines the U.S. national capital from multiple perspectives as a case study of social, political, cultural, and medical/scientific transitions provoked or accelerated by the Civil War. The project draws on the methods of many fields to create a digital resource that chronicles the war's impact on the city. More...

Introductions — Essays, conference papers, grant narratives, and other materials introducing and discussing *Civil War Washington*.

Data — Database identifying people, places, organizations, documents, events, and relationships among them; file downloads.

Maps — Interactive maps presenting location-based data in both geographic and temporal dimensions.

Supports multi-scholar projects working on a larger project, such as a multi-author book, major data-mining, or organizing a conference.

Collaboration must involve at least two scholars from the same or different institutions.

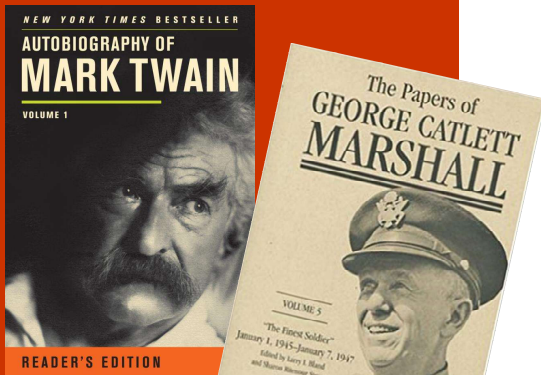Awards are made for one to three years and rarely exceed $100,000 per year.

Includes "Convening" and "Publication" projects.

Deadline: December

The Collaborative Research Program is for teams of scholars working on a larger, longer-term enterprise, like a multi-author book or a conference. Grants for these projects can be up to three years and can be renewed. They need to involve at least two scholars. The deadline is early December.

Division of Research Programs

SCHOLARLY EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

Supports the preparation of editions and translations of pre-existing texts of value to the humanities that are currently inaccessible or available only in inadequate editions or transcriptions.

Collaboration must involve at least two scholars from the same or different institutions.

Awards are made for one to three years and rarely exceed $100,000 per year.

Deadline: December

Scholarly Editions and Translations is for a team, collaborating on creating a critical edition of materials not available otherwise to scholars. Like Collaborative Research, grants for these projects can be up to three years and can be renewed. They need to involve at least two scholars. Another annual program with a deadline in early December.

Fellowship Programs at Independent Research Institutions
DIVISION OF RESEARCH PROGRAMS
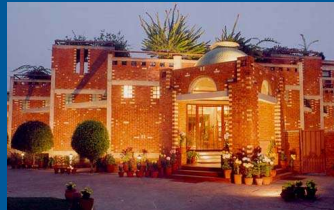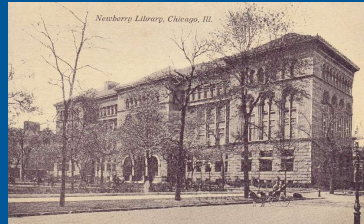
While we're talking about research, you should also know about the fellowships that we sponsor at **independent research institutions**. These are places like the Newberry Library in Chicago or the American Antiquarian Society, or the American Academy in Rome or American Institute of Indian Studies in New Delhi. These institutions invite scholars to come use their research resources and participate in their scholarly life. The NEH provides funds to support fellowships for those researchers. People apply directly to the institutions, who choose the fellows. The funding rate varies widely from place to place, some are more competitive than others.

DIVISION OF EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Funds projects that strengthen teaching and learning in the humanities through professional development and innovative curricular programs.

The Division of Education Programs supports grants to strengthen humanities education in elementary, secondary, and higher education institutions. This includes professional development for teachers, and curricular and program development. They are designed to serve a variety of institutional types, public or private, rural or urban.

Division of Education Programs

SUMMER PROGRAMS

SUMMER INSTITUTES
Awards: Up to $200,000

LANDMARKS OF AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE
Awards: Up to $180,000

DEADLINES
Directors: February 2022 for projects in 2023
Participants: March 2022 for projects in 2022

Summer institutes and Landmarks of American History are professional development programs for both K-12 teachers and college and university teachers. These are great opportunities, especially for early-career faculty. People regularly tell us how these programs have changed their careers and their teaching. The programs run one to four weeks, at sites all over the country. Institutes involve meeting for reading and discussion with experts centered on a topic, designed to enrich classroom teaching. Landmarks uses particular places to teach. If you have particular expertise that you think other teachers would find useful, you might think about directing a program yourself. The deadlines have unfortunately just passed.

Division of Education Programs
HUMANITIES INITIATIVES

Helps strengthen the teaching and study of the humanities by developing new humanities programs, resources, or courses, or by enhancing existing ones.

Applicants are encouraged to draw on the knowledge of outside scholars who would contribute expertise and fresh insights to the project.
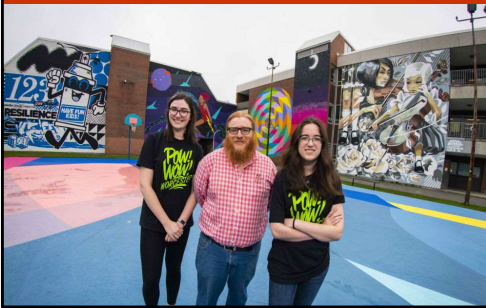
Deadline: May

Awards: Up to $150,000

Humanities Initiatives helps strengthen the teaching and study of the humanities at colleges and universities by developing new humanities programs, resources, or courses, or by enhancing existing ones. This is a broad program that can support many different kinds of work. The next deadline is May.

Division of Education Programs

HUMANITIES CONNECTIONS

Seeks to expand the role of the humanities in undergraduate education at two- and four-year institutions, involving at least one program or department outside the humanities

Deadline: September

Planning Grants: Up to 12 months

Implementation Grants: Up to 36 months

Humanities Connections seeks to expand the role of the humanities in the undergraduate curriculum at two- and four-year institutions by encouraging collaboration with units outside the humanities. Grants support the development and implementation of an integrated set of courses and student engagement ,activities focusing on significant humanities content in collaboration with colleagues in the natural and social sciences, or professional programs. The student engagement activities could include individual or collaborative undergraduate research projects; opportunities for civic engagement; or a structured experience with community-based, project-based, or site-based learning. The next deadline is September 2022 for projects beginning May 2023.

Division of Education Programs

DIALOGUES ON THE EXPERIENCE OF WAR

Supports the study and discussion of important humanities sources about war, in the belief that these sources can help U.S. military veterans and others think more deeply about the issues raised by war and military service.

Convenes at least two discussion programs for no fewer than fifteen participants.

Creates a preparatory program to recruit and train program discussion leaders.

Awards: Up to $100,000

Deadline: October

Dialogues on the Experience of War is a program for classrooms and general audiences, supporting the study and discussion of important humanities sources about war, in the belief that these sources can help U.S. military veterans and others think more deeply about the issues raised by war and military service.

edsitement.neh.gov

I also want to highlight here the Education Division's EDSITEment program. It contains teaching resources and lesson plans for the humanities for a variety of classes. Topics include arts, language, history, social studies, literature. There are single-class sessions and multiple classes. Most are focused on K-12 teaching. I've heard education professors say that it is a great resource for their student teachers. Some college teachers also use the lesson plans, especially for introductory classes. It's an amazing collection of stuff.

DIVISION OF PRESERVATION AND ACCESS

Funds projects that preserve and create intellectual access to collections and cultural heritage resources of importance for research, education, and public programming in the humanities.

Preservation and Access, as the name suggests, supports work that preserves documents and objects and makes them available for scholars and the general public. Many of these grants go to libraries, museums, and historic sites.

Division of Preservation and Access
TYPES OF CULTURAL HERITAGE COLLECTIONS

Books, journals, archives, and manuscripts

Archaeological and ethnographic artifacts

Prints and photographs

Moving images and sound recordings

Architectural and cartographic records

Decorative and fine art objects

Furniture, textiles, and historical objects

Born-digital materials

These programs support the preservation of cultural heritage collections, such as books, artifacts, images, objects, and born-digital materials.

Division of Preservation and Access
ACTIVITIES SUPPORTED

- Increasing access and intellectual control, through cataloging, arranging, and describing (e.g., library collections, archival records, museum artifacts)
- Extending the life of collections through conservation treatment, reformatting, and rehousing
- Digitizing collections, including historical United States newspapers
- Creating databases, spatial tools, and reference resources
- Conducting assessments and developing plans for the care of collections
- Planning and implementing sustainable solutions for preventive conservation of large and diverse holdings in cultural institutions
- Undertaking research and development to advance the field of preservation and access

Grants here support a wide variety of activities, including digitization, protecting collections, and creating reference materials. These projects result in a lot of different kinds of products.

Chronicling America
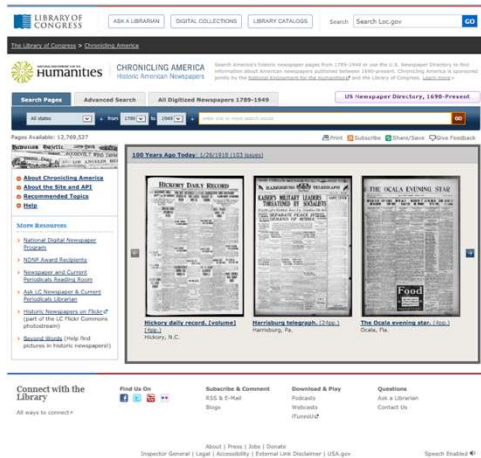
chroniclingamerica.loc.gov

Among the programs here is Chronicling America, which hosts digitized newspapers from all over the country. It currently contains over 11 million pages, from 1836 to 1922, often featuring small-town papers and some foreign-language immigrant papers. It is all searchable with metadata. The papers are chosen by state-level groups and the finished materials are hosted by the Library of Congress. Again, a great resource for student researchers. The Mississippi Department of Archives and History has received several grants to digitize Mississippi newspapers.

**Office of
Challenge Grants**

INFRASTRUCTURE AND
CAPACITY BUILDING
CHALLENGE GRANTS

Eligible activities include the design, purchase, construction, restoration, or renovation of facilities, and the purchase of equipment and software. Digital infrastructure is also a focus.

Awards aim to help institutions secure long-term support for their core activities and expand efforts to preserve and create access to outstanding humanities materials.
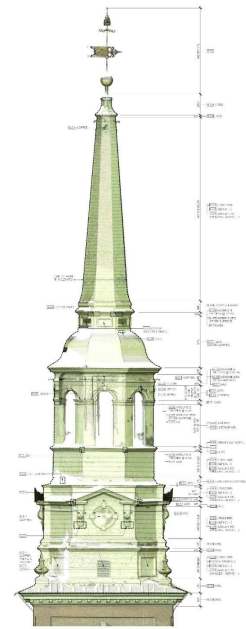
Our Office of Challenge Grants is focused on infrastructure and capacity building. These grants are for institutions doing fund-raising for long-term projects, matching money raised from outside sources. They support building construction and renovation, and the development of digital infrastructure.

Office of Challenge Grants

INFRASTRUCTURE
AND CAPACITY
BUILDING
CHALLENGE GRANTS

Special encouragement for two-year colleges,
HBCUs, TCUs, and HSIs:
1:1 matching requirement

All other applicants:
3:1 for projects requesting up to $500,000
4:1 for projects requesting $500,001-$750,000

Projects should address mid- to long-term
institutional objectives.

Direct expenditure projects last typically 4-5
years, and spend-down projects 5-10 years.

Deadline: May

These grants have different matching ratios for different kinds of institutions
and different sizes of projects. Most projects match at 3:1 or 4:1. The next
deadline is May.

DIVISION OF
PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Supports a wide range of public humanities projects that reach large and diverse public audiences and make use of a variety of formats including exhibits, public programs, film, radio, and digital media.

Our Division of Public Programs supports projects designed to engage broad public audiences with the humanities. Grants from this division support the development and production of museum exhibits, community engagement projects, various kinds of media, and digital projects.

**Division of
Public Programs
MEDIA PROJECTS**

IT TOOK
MILLIONS
OF STEPS
TO MAKE ONE
GIANT LEAP

CHASING
THE
MOON
A FILM BY ROBERT STONE

Supports the development and production of film, television, radio, and podcast projects.

Two levels of funding: Development and Production

Awards: Up to $75,000 for Development and up to $650,000 for Production

Deadlines: August + January

The Media Projects program supports the creation of documentary films, radio programs, and podcasts. These projects should aim for a national audience and must involve collaboration between film makers and scholars.

Division of Public Programs

PUBLIC HUMANITIES PROJECTS

Supports the planning and implementation of **permanent and travelling exhibitions**, **historic site interpretation**, and **discussion programs.**

**Two levels of funding:** Planning and Implementation

Awards: Up to $75,000 for Planning and Up to $400,000 for Production

Deadlines: August + January

The Public Humanities Projects program supports institutions that offer some sort of programming for public audiences. It supports interpretive work in historic sites or exhibits, or hosting discussions on important humanities topics.

Division of Public Programs

DIGITAL PROJECTS FOR THE PUBLIC
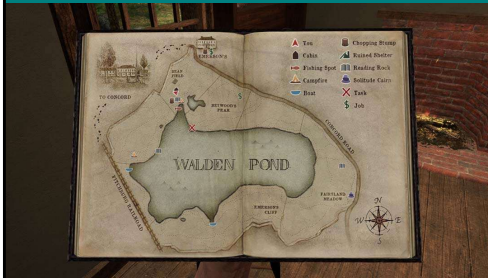
Supports the development, prototyping, and production of humanities-based digital projects, including games, curated websites, exhibits, virtual reality, and mobile apps.

Three levels of funding: Discovery supports the early-stage research of content and platform. **Prototyping** supports the development of a proof-of-concept prototype. **Production** supports the completion and distribution of the project.

Awards: Discovery: up to $30,000; Prototyping: up to $100,000; Production: up to $300,000.

Deadline: June

Digital projects for the public supports the creation of things like games, web sites, virtual reality, and mobile apps. One grantee has created a videogame based on Thoreau's Walden.

OFFICE OF DIGITAL HUMANITIES

Offers grant programs that address cultural changes brought about by the introduction and spread of digital technology. This includes projects that explore how to harness new technology for humanities research as well as those that study digital culture from a humanistic perspective.

Our Office of Digital Humanities is supporting a lot of cutting-edge work in incorporating technology into research and public engagement in the humanities. This includes creating new tools and collaborating on new research methods. Other projects look at the history and implications of digital culture. There is digital work in the other divisions, too.

Office of Digital Humanities
PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Computational methods or techniques that contribute to the humanities

Research on digital culture from a humanistic perspective

International collaboration in computationally-intensive humanities and social sciences

Workshops to discuss new and emerging methodologies and best practices

Institutes to train scholars, humanities professionals, and students in DH tools and methodologies

Grants from this division focus on developing new methods involving digital aspects of humanities research and dissemination. If you are developing a method, look here. If you are using a pre-existing method in a new area, look to one of the other divisions.

As you may know, each state and territory has a council on the humanities. These groups do programing as well as make grants for institutions and individuals in their state. Some of their financial support comes through the National Endowment's office of federal/state partnership. Mississippi Humanities is our partner there. I hope you find a way to connect with these valuable local assets—they always welcome partnerships with scholars in their work.

www.neh.gov

Application information

Grant database at bottom of page

The best source for information about the Endowment's work is our web site. It has all of our grant programs, all of our deadlines, and a wealth of other information, at neh.gov. On our site you will find information about how to apply for a grant. You can see the link there at the top of the page. At the bottom of the page you'll find an online database for all of our previous grants.

NEH.gov/grants
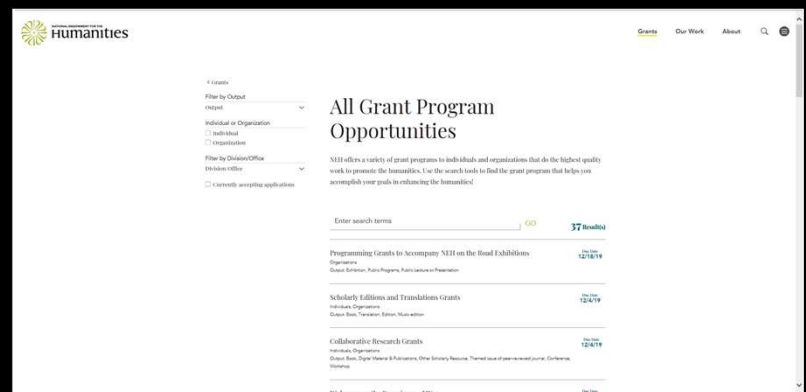
When you click on the Grants tab you will go to a list of all of our grant programs, with links to the page for each of those programs. On those pages you'll find the guidelines, officially called the Notice of Funding Opportunity. They are long and a bit bureaucratic, but grant applicants should spend some time reading them. They'll tell you who can and who cannot apply for a grant, what grants can and cannot support, what an application should include, and how applications will be evaluated. Key to that are the criteria that our peer review panelists use when assessing applications. Also on that page is a link to recently funded applications, to get a sense of the kinds of things that a program can support, and a link to sample applications—previously successful applications that you can use as inspiration and suggestion—though not necessarily as a model—for your application. There will also be contact information for the program's staff.

A few application-writing tips

- Prepare
- Make your case
- Think about your audience
- Attend to details

NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT
FOR THE
HUMANITIES

I'll share a few tips for writing a strong application. There's a handout that goes with this.

First, prepare. Read the program guidelines, called the Notice of Funding Opportunity. They will tell you what is eligible and what's not, and what an application should contain. The program web page also includes sample applications. Don't take those as models, but as examples of how someone else made the case for her/his project. And contact NEH staff with questions. We can help you figure out what program is right for your project. Contact information is on each program web page. For some programs staff will read and comment on draft applications.

Second, make your case. The peer reviewers will evaluate your application's importance and quality of your project based on the program criteria. Your application should make a case for how your application meets those criteria. For most programs, the most important criterion is significance. Why is this important and to whom? I'll show you those criteria in a moment.

Third, think about the audience for your proposal. It will be read by specialists and generalists. It should persuade the specialists that you know what you are doing. It should persuade the generalists that it will be important to someone, even if it isn't important to them. That makes that your language should be clear to non-specialists.

Fourth, attend to details. Read and re-read your application. Have colleagues read a draft, especially those who don't know as much about your field. If a program will review drafts, take advantage of that. Program officers' comments don't enter into final review, but they can be really helpful as you develop your proposal. Proof-read!

Evaluation Criteria
FELLOWSHIPS AND SUMMER STIPENDS

1. The intellectual significance of the proposed project, including its value to humanities scholars, general audiences, or both.

2. The quality or promise of quality of the applicant's work as an interpreter of the humanities.

3. The quality of the conception, definition, organization, and description of the project and the applicant's clarity of expression.

4. The feasibility of the proposed plan of work, including, when appropriate, the soundness of the dissemination and access plans.

5. The likelihood that the applicant will complete the project.

How Program Officers Can Help You

Answer questions about grant programs

Offer advice on preparing applications

Provide feedback on draft proposals
(for *some* grant programs)

—Maria Biernik/NEH

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

Let me repeat something I said at the beginning. NEH program officers are fellow scholars, and they want to help support your work. That's why we do what we do. Please contact us with questions. If we don't know the answer, we'll find someone who does. We can offer advice on preparing applications. For many programs (but not all) we will read and offer feedback on draft proposals.

A story: Three years ago I visited a small college in Iowa and met with a faculty member. I asked her a bunch of questions. After one of her answers I said, hey, that's your project! She said, I had never said it that way before. She turned that into a proposal and ended up being successful. So these kinds of conversations do pay off.

Questions?

Daniel Sack
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