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National Endowment for the Humanities



NEH: An Overview

Organization of NEH

<http://www.neh.gov/about/organization>

- Division of Public Programs
- Division of Research
- Division of Education
- Office of Challenge Grants
- Office of Digital Humanities
- Division of Preservation and Access
- Bridging Cultures

NEH serves as the primary federal funding source for Humanities funding at the national and state levels

State Humanities Councils apply to NEH every year for funding and for special project funding.

NEH Funding Strategy

- Begin with an application to attend a NEH funded Seminar, Institute, or Workshop
<http://www.neh.gov/grants/apply-neh-funded-seminar-institute-or-workshop>
Helps you develop connections with NEH funded Directors – NEH really appreciates having one of its Seminar Directors be a reference for one of your other applications.
- Apply for Summer Stipend for Individual Work
- Project Grants – if possible work with a senior colleague on a successful Collaborative Research or other Major Division grant project
- Individual Fellowships are the most competitive of all – receive so many applications, the Program Officers will not review them in advance.

NEH: Things to Know

- NEH Program Officers may be the most helpful of all Sponsors – federal and private.
- **NEH Program Officers will critique draft proposals** if you plan far enough in advance with the exception of the Individual Fellowship or Summer Stipend.
- NEH grants take a great deal of time to put together; therefore always start early
- NEH offers you successful sample applications on line to use when preparing yours
- NEH has consistent deadlines and always posts their new guidelines on line at least two months in advance

NEH: Things to Know

- NEH grants are electronic now and utilize Grants.gov for all submissions – the Individual Fellowships and Summer Stipends – submitted by individuals – all others submitted by the Division of Sponsored Programs – talk with Ann Knudson or Kristi Fitzpatrick for assistance.
- NEH takes up to 9 months to make a decision on the application; therefore it's critical for you to plan several years ahead for what programs makes the most sense for your research agenda and your stage of career
- NEH allows you to resubmit. You can get reviewers comments if your proposal is unsuccessful but you must request them in writing.

Sponsored Programs

Contacts for NEH

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<http://dsp.research.uiowa.edu/dsp-staff-directory>

Tips from the NEH

Evaluation criteria

Evaluators are asked to apply the following five criteria when judging the quality of applications:

- 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.

Source: NEH application writing workshop, 2011

Tips from the NEH

Improve your chances of success

- (Only for some programs) Ask the staff to comment on a draft application.
- Become a panelist or reviewer.
- Read applications for your institution.
- Panelists will only know you're applying again if you tell them; bitter words about a previous submission usually distract from your argument and take up space.

Source: NEH application writing workshop, 2011

Tips from the NEH

Common misconceptions about peer review

- The same panelist kills my application year after year.
- Only elite schools are funded because panelists come from elite schools (old boy's network).
- Panelists don't understand my field.
- Panelists don't appreciate my past work.
- I don't know anyone at NEH, so I will never get funded.
- My application won't get funded because NEH doesn't fund cutting-edge approaches or work in my field.
- I'm too junior to get funded.
- It's too early in my project.

Source: NEH application writing workshop, 2011

NEH Funding Rates

Fellowships

2010: Received 1235 applications, funded 111 (9%)

2011: Received 1405 applications, funded 99 (7%)

Summer Stipends

2010: Received 1014 and funded 85 (8%)

2011: Received 1000 – funding pending

Awards to Faculty

2010: Received 156 Funded 10 (6%)

Source: NEH application writing workshop, 2011

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES
SUMMARY OF GRANTS AND AWARDS, FY 2011

DIVISION/PROGRAM	NUMBER ¹	AMOUNT OBLIGATED ²		
		OUTRIGHT	MATCHING ³	TOTAL
EDUCATION PROGRAMS	122	12,933,350	--	12,933,350
PRESERVATION AND ACCESS	262	19,579,572	650,000	20,229,572
PUBLIC PROGRAMS	185	17,490,994	1,349,272	18,840,266
RESEARCH PROGRAMS	279	15,966,538	1,845,012	17,811,550
OFFICE OF CHALLENGE GRANTS	74	-	10,798,406	10,798,406
OFFICE OF DIGITAL HUMANITIES	67	4,334,509	--	\$4,334,509
FEDERAL/STATE PARTNERSHIP	83	\$42,888,028	\$1,881,911	\$44,769,939
MISC. HUMANITIES PROJECTS	14	1,416,953	--	1,416,935
GRAND TOTAL	1,086	\$114,609,926	16,524,601	\$131,134,527

¹ *New grants, supplemental awards on previous years' grants, transfers to other agencies, and program contracts.*